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ITALIAN RENAISSANCE FURNITURE

BY
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TRANSLATED BY
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WITH 134 ILLUSTRATIONS



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GIPCO

ENVIRONMENTAL
DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

For some years past, so lively an interest has been manifested in Italian furniture of the Renaissance, and also of the periods subsequent thereto, that the publication of this book needs no apology.

Two books hitherto, George Leland Hunter's **Italian Furniture and Interiors** and William M. Odom's **History of Italian Furniture from the Fourteenth to the Early Nineteenth Centuries**, have ministered to the general desire for information upon this topic. Various magazines, especially **House and Garden** and **Good Furniture**, have published sundry well illustrated articles upon the subject. The museums in different parts of the country have made praiseworthy efforts to acquire and to display appropriately the best specimens of Italian mobiliary art they could obtain. Architects and decorators have extensively employed Italian pieces in equipping houses with whose furnishing they were commissioned, and in numerous other ways a taste for Italian furniture has been so stimulated that furniture manufacturers are producing tables, chairs, chests, and other objects of domestic appointment from designs admittedly inspired by Italian models, while industrial art schools are paying more or less attention in their courses to the work of Renaissance Italian cabinet-makers.

On the one hand, in many cases where the design of houses has been perceptibly influenced by Italian ideas, there is naturally provided a background either suitable for the use of furniture of kindred provenance, or indeed actually requiring it. On the other hand, not a few interiors of composite and eclectic inspiration are so constituted architecturally that they supply a kindly foil and invite the employment of just such movables as Italian Renaissance design affords.

In either case a sound knowledge of the forms and methods practised by the Italian craftsmen is an essential desideratum not only for the architect, the interior decorator, the furniture designer, and the student of industrial art, but also for the layman of cultivated tastes and a catholic sense of appreciation. Such a volume as this cannot fail, therefore, to be a welcome addition to the literature upon the subject—a literature that is none too large—and it will substantially contribute to foster understanding of a rich field of decorative art whence we may draw both pleasure and many a profitable lesson.

Study of the plates and the accompanying data will reveal not only a considerable diversity of decorative processes, used either singly or in combination, but also the workings of a marvellously fertile invention in the marshalling and adaptation of a wealth of decorative **motifs**. Each part of Italy was so strongly individual in its manifestations of the decorative arts, no less than in the developments of painting, sculpture, and architecture, that it is not surprising to find these local individualities plainly reflected in the furniture produced, although, of course, there is unmistakably present the bond of an informing spirit of design common throughout the whole country at any given period.

The plates in the ensuing pages are so arranged that it is possible to trace both the local differences and the general underlying similarity. The reader may examine Tuscan types in one place, Ligurian in another, Umbrian in a third division, and so on through Lombard, Venetian, Roman, and all other local manifestations. This arrangement of the book, in a manner conducive to convenient comparison and analysis, will be found one of its most valuable features.

Italian interiors of the period when the pieces illustrated were made, and for the appointment of which those pieces were intended, may be broadly classified as being severely restrained. Interiors of the former category were elaborate in the composition of their fixed decorations and displayed all the wealth of polychrome treatment that could be devised in the way of either frescoes or diapered patterns for the walls; not infrequently there was the added embellishment of panelling composed of carved and inlaid wood, or of colored marbles; and the ceilings, whether plastered and painted with glowing designs, or beamed with carved corbels and polychrome enrichment, correspond in splendor with the walls.

Interiors of the second category were simple in scheme, often to the extent of austerity, and depended for their distinction upon the emphasis of enrichment concentrated at one or more points where it would prove most effective. The concentrated enrichment might consist of the painted and gilt corbels, beams, and panels of the ceiling; of polychrome doors; or of an elaborately wrought fireplace. For the enhancement of the spots of color or carving, the plain walls served as admirable foils.

In either case it was necessary to the best results that the furniture be rich in quality. For the ornate interior, rich workmanship was essential to render the furniture in keeping with its highly organized background. On the other hand, richly wrought furniture in a room of austere character ensured the valuable element of contrast.

Italian rooms of the Renaissance period were sparsely furnished according to the notions of many people at the present day. In a country like Italy, where it is not only possible but inviting to live in the open for so great a part of the year, and where so much use is made of the gardens, there is no occasion for houses to be so fully furnished as in more northern latitudes where a far greater proportion of the time must inevitably be spent within doors.

When the domestic habits of the period, and other conditions also, dictated the employment of a relatively small number of pieces, it was possible, and indeed natural, in accordance with the ideal of **quality** rather than **quantity**, to make each item of furniture a finished work of art, complete in itself and not dependent upon adjacent pieces to give it its value. Even when **cassoni** were made in pairs, to give symmetry of contour in certain places, the decorations often displayed not a little variation. The masters of the time understood harmony without stupid iteration, and the pernicious idea of iresome "tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee" repetition in so-called suites was left to a less inventive age to exploit.

Another element that contributed to strong individualism exhibited by sep-

arate pieces was the fact that eminent artists in that age of manifold activities often "deemed it worthy of their best efforts to design a single piece of furniture and execute it with their own hands." When Botticelli or Andrea del Sarto, and the ablest of their pupils, painted **cassone** panels, or when Donatello or Bernardino Ferrante wrought the carving of a chest, a table, or a **cassa panca**, we may well understand why each object possessed so much character.

With some preliminary conception of the rooms themselves, and of the nature of the furniture that went into them, the student of Renaissance decorative art may go on to an intelligent appreciation of the pieces illustrated in this book. One fact, however, must be borne in mind. The compiler chose for illustration chiefly examples of what are usually called "museum pieces." Within the compass of a small book, where it is impossible adequately to illustrate the entire mobiliary development of an age, it is quite defensible to select the finest pieces of their several kinds for presentation. But we must remember that much of the simpler furniture of the period, while not possessing the sumptuous carved or painted enrichment of the master-pieces, nevertheless had a goodly share of grace of form and dignity of ornament.

Those minded to pursue the subject further will find admirable collections accessible for study in the museums of the Italian cities, in the South Kensington Museum in London, and in the different American museums—especially in Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Brooklyn and Chicago—where new acquisitions are continually being made and where every facility is placed at the disposal of the student.

FOREWORD

The invitation to work upon a second edition of the *Manual of Italian Furniture of the Renaissance* came to me from the House that published it in 1902, with an accompanying question regarding translations. This gave me agreeable proof of consideration for my efforts to bring together the widely distributed, and for the most part neglected, material, which I have endeavored to place in its order with reference to the period and the school to which it belonged. I know that it was only an attempt, and that it is on the whole, the first, so in many respects it needs completion and rectification. Although the value of their art and craft is well understood in Italy, the authorities, until now, have for the most part hindered any consideration of it, on account of their anxiety to keep their pictures and works of art in the country. Unfortunately, in the meantime the ever-diminishing stock of old furniture will be so thoroughly ransacked by the art dealer that, later, what has been neglected can never be recovered. Italy is indebted to several art inspired collectors and dealers that there are at present in Italian museums the beginnings, at least after some correction, of a number of excellent collections. Ahead of all the rest are those of the Marchese d'Azeglio, in the Museo Civico at Turin and in his castle in the hills of Piedmont; of Cav. Poldi Pezzoli in Milan, whose museum is the foremost art foundation of Italy; of the brothers Bagatti-Valsecchi in Milan; of the Frenchman, A. Carrand, who in his collection of small works of art and in the art craft work of the National Museum of Florence, has left behind him a priceless gift; of the dealer in antiques, Elia Volpi, who in fitting up his admirably restored Davanzati-Davizzi palace in Florence, has given a wonderful example of Italian furniture and its placement. Since a satisfactorily complete assemblage of these things is no longer possible, it is the more important that those scattered about in the museums and found in the collections of other countries should be intelligently sifted and the results compiled. In order, however, gradually to arrive at a trustworthy representation of the house furnishings of the different parts of Italy, it should be the special task of our Italian colleagues to bring together as completely as possible, the material concerning them to be found in contemporary pictures, documents, and writings; a task which I, unfortunately, on account of my age as well as my infirmity, cannot undertake.

For help in my work I have particularly to thank the great Italian dealers in antiques through whose hands, for the last ten years, the most and the best of Italian furniture has passed, and especially Messrs. Stefano Bardini, Elia Volpi, and Luigi Grassi, of Florence.

BODE

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY

In the Middle Ages the Italian living-room was, according to our present day conception, almost bare. As even now in the old Italian peasant's house (those of the Province of Venetia yet show plainly the old Longobard type) the hearth in the middle and the masonry about it form the natural abiding place of the inhabitant in the cold and damp seasons, so the chimney-piece, usually of colossal form, was the most prominent feature and obviously the central point in the room of a mediæval palace. Around the walls were benches which, by opening the seat, could be used at the same time as chests and on these, at least in certain rooms, great soft cushions made the seat more comfortable. A long table (only in exceptional cases were there more) stood in front of the benches; more often it was set up before them when it was needed, being made up of two trestles holding a heavy plank. Near by, and before the hearth, stood unadorned stools in braided straw. In a smaller room a low bed was constructed, with high steps running around it that were used both as chests and as seats, a row of unornamented stools and chairs being the only additional furniture. To accommodate the necessary household utensils and vessels, where they did not find a place in the chests, cupboards were built into the thick walls of the rooms and chambers. These were seldom closed. This scanty furniture was of a simple form and substantial build; it was handed down from one generation to another without much change or addition.

The new period—the Renaissance—did not at first cause any fundamental change in this disposition of household effects; it found its task in this field in the perfecting of church furnishings. The choir stalls, the bishop's throne, the pulpit, the organ, the sacristy wardrobes and desks, the framing of the altar pictures, and the like, had, particularly in Florence, large monumental form, and were enlivened not only by modest wood-carving and beautiful intarsia, but occasionally also by the finest coloring through painting. Moreover the town halls, hospitals, libraries, and other public buildings, were fitted up with similar furniture, at times even very splendidly.

First toward the middle of the XV century, outside Florence first in the second half of the Quattrocento, with the urge of individualism and the more pronounced cultivation of the ego, the demand for richer and more comfortable furnishings for the house became livelier and more general. In the time of the great Medici and under their leadership the Florentine house acquired its modern furnishings; new forms, even new combinations of furniture, answering to the modern demand for comfort, were found and perfected. In this development the influence of church furniture betrays itself plainly in the severe straight forms, in the frugal disposition of effective carving, as in the preference for coloring by means of painting and gilding, and notably through the use

of different colored woods. The further development of Florentine cabinet work is based on the forms that were found in this time. Michelangelo's activities as sculptor and architect had, in the second and third decade of the Cinquecento, even in this handicraft, a different significance. His "cabinet architecture," as Jakob Burckhardt in his "Michelangelos Innendekoration in der Laurentiana" and in the "Gruft der Mediceer," indicates, brought to architecture entirely new forms and concepts; it offered an abundance of motives for cabinet work, capable of development. Thence came the characteristic Baroque movement in form, and especially in the decoration, of the Florentine High Renaissance. The form with movement and ornament full of expression led to abandoning the coloring of furniture, which was left in its natural hue, strengthened, to be sure, with color pigment and the well toned gilding of certain projecting ornaments. It was after the middle of the century that the forms became simpler and more architectural, for that reason, however, more useful and less picturesque.

One of the most interesting and at the same time the most important pieces of Renaissance furniture is the chest, cassa, or cassone, which is of great significance in the life of the Italian. Since the chests by the bed were considered the principal pieces in the outfit of a young married couple, the most important ones were designated bride, or wedding, chests. In the Middle Ages chests were used also as portable furniture and because of the roving life led by the richer classes, nobility as well as merchants, were transformed into travelling baggage in many different ways. Before everything the chest carried, with the clothing, money and jewels, that on account of the uncertain conditions, could not safely be left at home. Serving this purpose gave to them, in Italian as well as in French the name, cassa or coffret. It was necessary to put into the "coffers" at the same time clothing, laundry, and all kinds of useful things, even to beds, carpets, weapons, cooking utensils, and so on, to take with them, as the inns, when there were any, for the most part offered nothing but bare walls and a hearth or a fireplace. On that account they took care so to arrange these coffers or chests, inside and out, that they could turn them into seats or tables. People of rank took with them on their travels numerous large and small coffers. So we find with the permanently fixed wall bench (which was, we have said, used to hold linen and clothing), also movable chests; these stood around the sides of the room. In the fifteenth century and even until the sixteenth, these (the wedding chests) were decidedly the most valued and the most sumptuous pieces in the palace, particularly in Tuscany. Here there was an independent guild of chest painters, among whom occasionally the foremost artists undertook the decoration of chests and similar pieces, laying out on them rich compositions with antique and allegorical motives. From the unusually numerous pieces that have been preserved, Paul Schubring in his splendid work, "Cassoni," has brought out a very complete group of Early Renaissance chests and chest paintings. Their rich artistic embellishment seems notably to have come out of the great hospitals, foundling asylums, and similar institutions, such luxury indicating the possession of a considerable revenue. Among a number of

such chests that came, in 1880, into the dealers' hands from the storehouse of S. Maria Nuova, were characteristic examples of such Florentine cassoni of the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries. They are mostly high and have a rounded cover, so they could not have been used as seats. On a painted ground a moulded decoration in color is applied; knights and minnesingers, conventionalized animals and plants, or ornaments, bedecked the different sides and the cover; between them were flat gaily painted iron hoops. A pair of these chests, that had been preserved in their own place and position, are now in the Museo Nazionale in Florence (Ill. 1). At the same time (1400) essentially smaller and lighter chests for private use were produced that were flat on the top, and on the front, toward the bottom, were arched, and had a short foot-board beneath. These were painted with the arms and emblems of the family (Ill. 2). Only these and similar light, plain chests could be taken on journeys.

The Florentine chests of the fifteenth century have regular straight sides, flat or slightly rounded covers, and strong simple bases with or without lion feet. A frequent, very characteristic variety of these chests that originated in Tuscany in the Cinquecento, is decorated on the front with gilded low relief in applied forms of moulded plaster: plants (copied from contemporaneous patterns for stuffs), animals, emblems and fabulous beasts, all done in a very conventional, heraldic manner. Occasionally also there were sumptuous compositions, notably of battles, the tasks of Hercules, allegorical or mythological figures or scenes (Ill. 3 to 5), that were at times modelled by prominent artists, but they also were, as a rule, treated very conventionally. These appear in Florence as well as in Siena and the neighboring cities. The vaulted or curved top was customarily gilded and had a simple decoration of carving or applied low relief: on the ends were painted coats-of-arms or ornaments, and iron handles for lifting the chest.

The partiality for inlaid woodwork in the Quattrocento led to the employment of intarsia also, in the ornamentation of the chests, that were then of unusually stately construction, with fine profile work, as well as consummately beautiful design. A number of the most noted Florentine architects and sculptors were from birth intarsia workers and kept their flourishing and remunerative workshops near by, even when they were among the most sought after of the architects. From these shops the stately chests went out that, as we see in pictures, were also, on account of their height, turned into tables (Ill. page 7); the decorations on the front of these showed putti with wreaths, or on each side of a coat-of-arms, city views, musical instruments, and the like; more rarely a rich composition in intarsia is shown, while the moulding consists of delicate ornament that is also done in woods (Ill. 8-11).

How cherished the chests of this time were, and how they were valued, is best witnessed by the number of such cassoni that are decorated with paintings by the hands of the foremost Florentine painters. Among famous chest painters like Dello Delli, Marco del Buono, Apollonio di Giovanni and others, Pesellino, Botticelli, Filippino, Paolo Uccelli, Signorelli, Piero di Cosimo and other re-

* nowned painters of the Quattrocento, in Florence as well as Siena, have decorated chests. Even in the first decade of the Cinquecento we see prominent artists like Andrea del Sarto, Franciabigio, Granacci, Bacchiacca and Pontormo engaged in the work. "Not only in the Medici Palace and in all old Medician houses, but in all the principal houses in Florence one finds such chests even yet," Vasari relates. The painted sides of these chests decorate today, as paintings, the largest museums.

The favorite subjects are tales borrowed from the Old Testament, the ancient sagas or the Italian novelle; the deeds of young David, the Trojan war, the Labors of Hercules or the adventures of Aeneas, the story of Esther, of Lucretia, Judith, Virginia, Penelope, Griselda, and so on, including allegorical compositions with love and truth as themes. Occasionally also there were representations of the time, such as battles, hunts, tournaments, festivals of all kinds, and other themes that expressed the sentiment of young married couples (Ill. 7). This truly monumental piece of furniture, besides being a favorite wedding present among the great families of the Quattrocento, held a prominent place set up against the walls of the room, and was sometimes raised on detached, delicately executed supports, which at the same time protected it. Unfortunately, hardly one of these most valuable chests has been preserved intact, for the paintings have been taken out, they being the only parts that were valued, and that the galleries wished to exhibit; the rest was regarded as worthless. Such a chest, without doubt, was the stately Strozzi cassone, which was completed for the wedding of a Strozzi with a Medici in the year 1513. It is now in the Berlin Kunstgewerbe-Museum. The painted front has been taken out and replaced by an older intarsia picture (Ill. 10). The same is true of various similar large chests, the form and decoration of which permit us to infer an embellishment of painted sides. The majority of the painted chests were, however, adorned by the merry representations of the chest painter or with ornamental decoration, mostly of coats-of-arms and emblems that were simply and largely handled, with strong tints on a colored background.

On the older chests of this kind, the inlaid as well as the painted ones, the carving was mostly on the strongly accented corners and on the mountings, in the form of modest ornament, confined to the egg and dart, the heart leaf, and the like. The decoration of chests through rich pictorial carving is found first in the time of the High Renaissance. As thereby the beauty of the woods as such, and the artistic work of the carvers, gained appreciation, coloring, through painting, intarsia, etc., was abandoned. Through strong profile work, high relief, and lively projection the artists achieved in this time as rich and varied an effect as their predecessors had through color. At the corners we find vigorously formed masks, armorial bearings, putti, prisoners (borrowed from Roman triumphs), or Sphinxes arising from rich plant ornament which adorned the front, while in the middle, as a rule, was a cartouche with armorial bearings or emblems. The cover is of diminished size on the top and has rich profile work and carving (Ill. 12). The front is variously decorated in high relief with representations from Roman history or ancient mythology, that are placed

right and left of the vigorous armorial bearings in the middle. The most sumptuous pieces of this kind seem to have been made for Roman families by Florentine workmen; for this reason we shall come back to them in the discussion of Roman furniture (compare page 44 and Ill. 125 & 126).

With these luxurious and decorative pieces came very numerous simple low chests which being mostly adapted for seats have flat tops. The front panel, smooth or enriched with carving in moderate relief, is framed in with very fine and effective ornament, while at each end are side pieces decorated with small plaster forms or divided into several equal parts (Ill. 13 and 14).

The ornament on these different types of cassoni of the High Renaissance is often in part gilded—"lighted up with gold", *luneggiato in oro*—as the Italians aptly describe it. For this purpose the gold was as a rule toned, and the wood also, instead of being left in its natural color, was covered with a brown tone akin to that of wood, by saturating it with a mixture of transparent or opaque color with wax. By this means the gold was made to combine well with the wood and the wood with the separate colors or paintings, where such, in the beginning of the High Renaissance were yet found on the chests; by this means too, the pieces of furniture were made to harmonize in a delightful way with each other and with the color of the walls and the hangings of the room. Unfortunately this tone, that through age has often acquired depth and a picturesque effect, has been lost through washing, waxing and oiling, due to lack of taste and the failure in our time to comprehend the artistic intent of the old masters.

At the same time with the cassone came the cassetta, a characteristic household piece from Tuscany. Gold, jewels, caps, fine pieces of linen, and the like, were in the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries kept in round or oval boxes, decorated in plaster, or with paintings, not seldom by the most noted artists, as some examples of great beauty (preserved in the South Kensington Museum, in the Figdor collection in Vienna, in the Berliner Kunst-Gewerbe-Museum, etc.) bear witness. Special favorites were the caskets decorated in pastiglia, of simple coffer form with rich compositions of figures in relief that were modelled in yellow-grey plaster (*pasto da riso*). These are done on a gilded ground and kept in their own color, the ornament being lightly gilded; they portray triumphs, ancient myths, scenes from ancient history, or allegorical motives. One of the richest and finest of these caskets, that in the Berliner Kunst Gewerbe-Museum, is shown in illustration 17. These plaster caskets, seem mostly to have been made in Florence in the second half of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries.

Such caskets and boxes no longer satisfied the growing demands, principally because their small size and lightness made them particularly liable to theft; from them were evolved caskets in form and decoration very much like the larger chests. At first they were inlaid with colored woods or covered with plaster ornaments and gilded. In Florence as well as in Siena from the end of the Quattrocento they were carved in walnut in the same way as were the larger chests, and were lightly toned and partly gilded (Ill. 15). To some extent in

keeping with them, the carving is generally modest; for that reason the fineness of the profile work and the finish, as well as the proportions, are noticeable. Of the same fineness of proportion and ornament is a simple casket of about 1500 in the Berliner Kunst Gewerbe-Museum that yet shows the old toning. A similar one is found among the decorative pieces in the Kaiser Friedrich-Museum (Ill. 16). Richer but already somewhat coarser in execution are the caskets of a little later origin, the sides of which are inlaid with rare antique marbles. The number of cassette of this kind preserved would indicate that they were used in all the better houses in Tuscany.

Because of the separation of the chest from the bench the latter were not superfluous, especially since the chests as seats were numerous only in later times. The wall bench held its place in many rooms, especially in the vestibules of the Florentine houses, even during the Renaissance. We also occasionally find, as in the Palazzo Strozzi, even the plinths of the houses used as benches for the hospitable reception of the household attendants and the common people. The wall bench was often ornamented richly; the legs then terminated in lion feet, and the high back, which served at the same time as a wainscot, was decorated more or less with rich designs in intarsia, similar to that of the choir stalls in the churches, though in a simpler style. After the fifteenth century we meet also the movable bench, detached from the wall. This as a rule is smaller and without a back, its lid-like seat being always movable so that the inside may be used as a chest. The sides are curved inward as a protection against the feet, for the reception of which a small tread-board is placed below in front of the bench. The decoration of such benches, when they were made for a sumptuous setting, is of simple intarsia ornament or decorative painting, in later times confined to strongly carved but flat ornament, as the illustration of a pair of such little benches in the Kaiser Friedrich-Museum in Berlin shows (Ill. 18, 19 and 20).

In the middle of the fifteenth century, or soon after, yet another characteristic piece was evolved from the wall bench, which the Italians appropriately term *cassapanca*. It was first used as a seat, but afterward served as a chest. This piece also, the ancestor of our sofa, is specifically Florentine and did not go beyond Florence and its neighborhood, where it was in fashion for about a hundred years. In its strong, straight, chest form, with its low sides, it conveys to an unusual degree an impression of the serious, vigorous, and monumental character of the Florentine Renaissance furniture. On a projecting foot-board the substructure stands in true chest form, and like the chests was used to hold clothing, linen and the like; on this lower piece (usually closing flat on the top) stand the back and sides. In the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries the *cassapanca* was almost entirely flat and the simple ornamentation generally of intarsia. The Kaiser Friedrich-Museum in Berlin has an excellent piece of the kind and there are several still older ones in the Villa Torre del Gallo (Bardini) outside Florence, and in the Palazzo Davanzati (Ill. 21). In the sixteenth century the forms had more movement, the profile work was stronger, while the ornamentation consisted of carving, and masks and armorial

bearings were disposed in suitable places. These pieces became really available for seating only through the use of large cushions on the seat and sides as well as at the back. Because of their large and massive construction these unusually durable pieces of furniture have been preserved in the palaces and villas of the principal Florentine families in considerable numbers; they have, however, recently, almost without exception, gone into the museums and private collections, where the armorial bearings of the Medici, Antinori, Strozzi, and others, are to be found on them, betraying their origin. We give some illustrations of unusually noble or sumptuous pieces as they are found in the Museo Nazionale in Florence, in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and especially in the collections of Paris, Berlin and other places (Ill. 21-25). A cassapanca of the kind, of unusual simplicity and modest bulk, with an exceptionally high back, is found in the collection of Baron Heinrich von Tucher, in Nuremberg; another is in the possession of Professor Otto Lanz, in Amsterdam.

What the cassapanca was in the common room, the throne, **trono**, was in the state drawing-room of the palaces belonging to the foremost Florentine families. From a sumptuous raised throne the high-born married couple received their guests in Republican Florence. The throne of the princely families of the Middle Ages, as in the Renaissance, consisted of an ample chair or a bench with some gorgeous material thrown over it, behind which a baldachino rose. By the annexation of the Bishop's Chair in the churches, Florence found a fitting model for her rich patricians: a bench approached by two steps, having a high back finished with a strong moulding. At the beginning of the Cinquecento this moulding occasionally projected far forward and then rested on slender turned and carved pillars that were supported on the low side pieces.

Of the few thrones of this kind that have been preserved, the age is shown in the inlaid ornament of the modest profile work, such as that of the throne from the Filippo Strozzi palace in Florence, now in the possession of Baron Moritz Rothschild of Paris (Ill. 27); the later ones of the first three decades of the Cinquecento have besides a certain amount of carving of the finest conception and execution, as we are made to realize in the famous fresco—the Birth of John—in the vestibule of the Annunziata at Florence (Ill. 26). The throne of the young Giuliano dei Medici, whose statue is preserved in the Medici Chapel, is one of this kind, of very tasteful construction. From the Nuti family, into whose possession it had come through inheritance, it fell to Prince Demidoff, who allowed it to be defaced by retouching and the introduction of modern intarsia (Ill. 28).

We have very little information concerning the form and development, in the earlier part of the Renaissance, of the most important furniture used for seating—the chair. Since, especially among the originals from the fifteenth century, comparatively few with an authentic history have been preserved, we are practically dependent upon illustrations, paintings and embroidery of the time, which in this matter are incomplete and not always trustworthy. The chairs of earlier times are generally simple; the seat is apt to be low and made of braided straw. The forms that since the beginning of the Cinquecento have

been most clearly defined: the stool, the straight chair without arms, and the armchair, we find, to be sure, in the Quattrocento, but the rich artistic conformation belongs to the before mentioned time.

- The only known Florentine stool, **sgabello**, with rich decoration of the fifteenth century, now in the possession of Dr. Figdor, in Vienna (Ill. 29 and 30), comes from the Palazzo Strozzi. It is ornamented above on both sides of the back with armorial bearings that in form and get up correspond exactly with the arms on the reverse of the Filippo Strozzi medal; that also had its origin in 1480. Yet this is, particularly in its form, with its small high back, a very original piece; the decoration is confined almost entirely to armorial bearings in low relief as an upper finish to the back. In the sixteenth century the sgabello was hardly less richly decorated than the chest, especially in Florence, where this decoration was again carried out in carving, the effect of which they knew how occasionally to heighten by gilding applied to certain parts. Excepting on
- the seat itself and the inside of the boards, the whole sgabello was as a rule very elaborately carved; the decoration generally characterized well the respective parts in their particular function. A dozen of these sgabelli close together, as, for example, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which has a quantity of the most beautiful ones in perfect condition, have the effect of being too sumptuous, overladen; but in the large rooms of the Tuscan palace, that were according to our ideas almost empty, as they were ranged along the sides and grouped about the large table, the effect was well calculated and fine. We give a few characteristic examples of the earlier sgabello as well as the richly carved ones of a later time, particularly those privately owned in Paris, where there is a greater number of them (Ill. 31 to 35).

We find the sgabello often without a back, as a hocker, sometimes four sided and quite like the sgabello just described in construction and decoration, sometimes three sided, which was the favorite form in Gothic times. The hocker is generally somewhat lower than the typical sgabello.

- The Renaissance chair was evolved from the ancient folding stool. The folding chair made wholly of staves joined together, with a movable seat and a removable back, called in Italy the Savonarola chair, in modern German cabinet work designated with equal impropriety the Luther chair, had its artistic form also in the fifteenth century. In Florence, however, this X chair in its simple strong framework (generally of iron with bronze balls, compare Ill. 36) was as a rule either elaborately carved or bedecked with rich tapestries, at least in the sixteenth century, among sumptuous surroundings; throughout that time it was fitted up in textiles, braids, fringes, tassels, gilded bronze nails and balls above on the back, in that luxurious yet tasteful manner, of which our modern upholstery art shows no conception. While the sgabello was used particularly
- as a dining chair, the chair described was designed as a resting place as well as a work chair. In a cassone picture of about 1480 a bronze chair of this form appears, which was for the time made to serve as a dining chair. Chairs inlaid with ivory "**alla Certosina**", that were made principally in Lombardy, and folding chairs decorated with carving and indentations, from Venetia and the

Marches, have been preserved in considerable numbers. An armchair of the kind, in X form, of Florentine origin, shows comparatively little of its old equipment (Ill. 37 and 37a), while many are found in the French and English collections in new mounting with old textiles and fringe. A characteristic example of the ordinary Florentine folding chair of an earlier time is given in our illustrations (38 and 39).

Another kind of chair, the wall chair—as one might call it—since like the *cassapanca* it was as a rule assigned a place at the side of the room, is distinguished from the typical chair only by its arms, its high back and large circumference, with the greater simplicity and the monumental form which this entailed. In Florence, where we know it first in the Renaissance, it is generally covered sumptuously in textiles, most often red velvet, more rarely leather, and it is enriched with effective passanterie work. Almost all of the back and the seat, which, when the cross piece is lacking, reaches almost to the middle of the framework, is covered with some textile. Cross pieces, backs, etc., are as a rule uncovered, strong, straight, and almost plain. A good idea of the distinctive appearance of these chairs is given in the illustrations (40 to 42). They seem indeed to us today somewhat stiff and uncomfortable, but one must not forget that they were made more comfortable by a large cushion thrown onto the seat.

The typical chair, the *sedia*, retained its simple form and equipment up to the time of the High Renaissance. As a rule the seat is of braided straw (generally with a cushion on it when used in the houses, Ill. 44), in the palace it was covered with leather or velvet. In the High Renaissance the back, with the introduction of a footboard, was ornamented by delicately turned rods and carving on the cross pieces. The low chair in our illustration, given again as an example (Ill. 43), shows how conformity to purpose, good proportion and effective ornamentation were happily preserved, even in a sumptuous and original expression. It has also a particular interest in that it is not only gilded here and there but in part painted. In this also, as the color is harmonized with the deep toned walnut and with the gold, the truly artistic spirit of the time is shown.

The rooms of one of our important modern houses, even when they are not of such extraordinary size, are much like the principal room in a Florentine palace if one could think of it as arranged for living, with a number of "établissements" of large and small tables in the middle of the room or in the corners and around the walls. The library in a modern English house, especially the country house, and the drawing-room of the American millionaire, alone come within any degree of relationship with the rooms of an Italian palace, their arrangement after that manner making of them the choicest rooms. Many of the great Halls are similarly fitted up. The Italians of the Renaissance, even in the later time, when they had grown accustomed to luxury, were not conscious of such requirements. For them, before everything the room must be large, for the reception of the assembled guests; no emphasis was then laid on "comfort." As a rule we find in the Florentine drawing-room at most a

table, four cornered, of an oblong shape, hardly as wide as our modern tables but of noticeable, even unusual, length, generally between two and four meters long. From its shape and size one might conclude that this table was particularly designed as a dining-table; this seems, however, not to have been the case in general. Almost all these tables are too high to use for dining; they are also mostly too narrow for a dining-table (usually they are hardly a meter in breadth). For this purpose, judging by paintings and engravings, within the family a plain table was used, but for great banquets strong planks laid over trestles served. These were covered by the large, splendid, linen table-cloth that hung down almost to the floor and lay on the carpet. They were also occasionally decorated, in a simple way, to be sure, as one example in Bardini's Villa Torre del Gallo outside Florence witnesses. It came from the Palazzo Strozzi and shows the arms of the Strozzi carved and framed in a delicate ornamentation. In this the trestles have two legs on one side and on the other only one straight leg. This simple form of portable table was used far into the sixteenth century (Ill. 45).

The Florentine room table, if I may so call it, had a monumental form that expressed size. It rested on two powerful double feet after an antique model; broad richly ornamented plates turned vigorously outward on each side into a lion foot and above, under the flat top, were generally decorated with a lion head or mask. In the fifteenth century these tables (designed only for rooms on the ground floor) were also of marble (Ill. 46 from the Villa Michelozzo), in the sixteenth century occasionally of bronze and marble. When they are of wood they are rarely without the cross-piece, the "traversa," on account of the great distance between the legs, and a support is generally placed in the space between the plates, resting directly on the legs (Ill. 52). In the High Renaissance both, like the feet and the edge of the top, are richly decorated. When the table was very large it had occasionally a third leg in the middle, or the joining piece between the legs was set on the floor instead of being in the middle of the space or near the top, in which case it rested as a flat slab unchangeably on the floor, furnishing an excellent counterpoise to the table top. A large table, now privately owned by an American (Ill. 53), gives a particularly favorable view of the taste and the architectural spirit of the Florentine cabinet maker of the Cinquecento, under the influence of Michelangelo's style of decoration. The large table, more than five meters in length, in the Raphael-Tapetensaal of the Berlin Museum, a characteristic example, bears witness that here also the natural hue of the wood was not fully appreciated, as it was covered over with a thin reddish color. It is Venetian work, done soon after the middle of the Cinquecento.

The large round table was not customarily used to write on; the writing table had from the early Middle Ages its individual form, and as a rule a special room also, which in time became the library. This form, known to all through miniatures and paintings, especially those representing the Church Fathers, is that of the writing-desk. Many of them had compartments that could be closed. They were placed on the sides of the chairs and had a slanting surface to write on. In the sixteenth century this piece stood by itself as a

small light writing-desk in inlaid wood or covered with finely ornamented leather or textile. It could be used in any room and on any table where one might wish to place it (compare Ill. 130). Of these small top desks a number, even from the fifteenth century, are preserved.

With increasing requirements small tables gradually appeared that were designed to be moved about in a room when necessary. In the Quattrocento these tables, of which only a few are of assured Florentine origin, were mostly of vigorous form, with strong round, or oftener hexagonal or octagonal, tops (many with drawers in them), one foot in the shape of a slender vase, with three or four legs in the form of dolphins or lion feet, and the like (Ill. 47-51). In the Cinquecento they were lighter and much richer in their decorations (Ill. 53). It is astonishing in what varied and tasteful ways they were fashioned on the same ground form, how effective they are and with what uniformity legs and tops are regularly designed. In the larger forms they have generally a light foot-board between the two great feet (Ill. 54); toward the end of the century these came into more common use, with four slender legs, not bound together.

The true wardrobe, indispensable in the sacristies and to some extent also in the public buildings, developed in diverse ways, was an exception in the Italian dwelling-house of the Renaissance. Instead of clothes closets and linen closets the Italian used chests; in the place of cases for books and household utensils as a rule he made use of a cavity in the wall that was in most cases open or partitioned. The credenza only, is for the Italian the favorite piece. Even in the Early Renaissance it held its characteristic form as a one-storied broad cupboard with several doors. It was of medium height, which made it possible to use the top as a sideboard. The credenza held this form almost without change until the Baroque period; the effective architectural construction, following the style of the time, is brought out only through smooth profile work, and ornament, at first of intarsia alone, later of carving (Ill. 56-59). The very wide credenze, of which Ill. 55 shows a good example, seem to have found employment only in the refectories. They have several double doors and are curved on the sides in a tasteful manner, as contemporary chest pictures show. As early as the Quattrocento they had the same form, and were then embellished with intarsia ornament.

In the Cinquecento, especially in Florence, the small credenza was a favorite. In its higher form it resembles a low cabinet; it has one door or a double door and in decoration adheres closely to the large credenze (Ill. 64 and 65). In the art trade they have frequently made over the bedside bench of the same period into such a credenzina by combining with it a box of similar shape, after taking away the kneeling board.

An unusual form of credenza appeared in Tuscany in the middle of the Cinquecento. As Ill. 66 shows, this piece has a strong projecting set of drawers resting on protruding supports of volute form; the flat top is embellished with a decoration resembling Roman moulding, with triglyph and drop. The lower part has a wide double door.

The small credenza, high and narrow, prepared the way for the cabinet,

which, as has been said, was not widely used as house furniture during the Renaissance.

Our modern commode is nearly related to a larger piece of a kind that is known to me only through the one in the illustration again referred to (Ill. 91), that was in an art shop in Florence years ago. Our illustration shows the construction; the decoration in intarsia is made up of simple palmetto friezes, the drawing of which permits the conclusion that it had its origin soon after the middle of the fifteenth century. Its character is true Tuscan even when the piece perhaps originated in Urbino or in some other place outside Tuscany, for the artist was then probably one of the many Florentine or Sienese craftsmen who worked away from their homes.

Our modern cabinet is similar to the writing cabinet. This had its rise in the course of the Quattrocento, as facility in writing became universal. It was designed partly to supply the need for something in which to preserve letters and other papers, as well as to hold the writing utensils, and partly that all these things might be conveniently at hand. The form of this old Italian writing cabinet, which is evidently Florentine, has remained practically unchanged even to our time. Of moderate size, almost twice as high as long, it had an upper and a lower part. The under part in exceptional cases and in earlier times was of table form, but was commonly designed as a cabinet with two doors. On it rested the slightly projecting upper part which was of about equal height, and harbored behind a folding leaf, or plate, the numerous little articles for facilitating the work of writing, etc. This leaf when open served as a writing table. The earliest pieces of the kind, known to me, are mostly decorated with rich and tasteful intarsia; in the High Renaissance, on the other hand, the cabinet maker had quite enough to do to satisfy the lust for carving on the writing cabinet; the estimation in which it was held by the giver of the commission corresponded. They easily did too much here, even of what was good, as in that singular, and at one time very much prized, variety of cabinet, of deep-toned and very effective walnut, with pillar-like groups of small figures built one over the other on the sides of the cabinet, and with similarly treated moulding decorated with figures (Ill. 61). Even when the best of the cabinets, in construction and tone, and in their proportions and profile, have a fine strong effect, in such productions the understanding the good Florentine cabinet makers had of how to treat the body, does not as a rule come out. My recollection of a pair of such writing cabinets in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg (from the Basilewski collection) is that they were unusually beautiful. The embellishment, although at times too rich in ornament, deserves a first place among these figure decorations (Ill. 60).

From paintings and wood-engravings we see that the writing table as a rule had a small slanting top piece that in many cases was removable. In construction, which is determined by its object, it shows hardly any change during the entire Renaissance; in the fifteenth century it was generally ornamented with intarsia, but in the beginning of the High Renaissance we find with that, or instead of it, decoration through carving. One of the rarely preserved

pieces, in the possession of Otto Beit in London (compare Ill. 130), is adorned on the sides with Nereids in high relief, that betray the hand of the skilful Florentine wood carvers who in 1520 produced the richly carved chests.

The high two-piece cabinet seems to have come more especially from upper Italy, where it really was adopted from the north. The few examples yet existing of the Gothic cabinet show here a close relationship with contemporary Tyrol furniture. Yet more similar are the few cabinets of the High Renaissance that have come down to us (Ill. 62 and 63). The higher upper part is built upon a low under section; both have double doors and the characteristic architectural members and ornaments of the Cinquecento. The two pieces illustrated here come from a Florentine art shop, but they originated in Brescia.

A one-storied high cabinet now in the Krefeld K. Wilhelm-Museum, the rich decoration indicating a period shortly after the middle of the Cinquecento, corresponds somewhat with our modern wardrobe. But neither this nor the two section cabinet seems really to have been adopted in Italy. They put away their clothing in the chests, and for the food, they did not use the cupboard, as in the North, but the credenza instead.

The bookcase, the **libreria**, though also rare, appears occasionally in the Florentine dwelling-house. Usually it had, as in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, several partitions, after the fashion of the wall cupboard. Such a bookcase, about six meters in width, divided into several sections, which makes it easy to move about, is owned by Prince Johann Liechtenstein, in Eisgrub (Ill. 67). It is of very good proportion and simply but tastefully decorated in High Renaissance forms that indicate a period about the middle of the sixteenth century. A small example of this style in the Kaiser Friedrich-Museum, in Berlin has, like the Liechtenstein bookcase, the lower part closed with two doors, the upper part open, with a wire screen over it; it is delicately ornamented and gilded here and there. How rich and splendid these bookcases occasionally were in the Quattrocento is proved by the information we have that Lionello d'Este in 1434 purchased, on account of its artistic form, a **libreria** that had been made for Paolo Giunigi, in Lucca, twenty years earlier.

Among the occasional furniture of the Florentine room there were some small pieces, notably pedestals for busts, the wall mirror, and the clothes rack. They came out first, so far as we know, in the second half of the fifteenth century. The busts of the Quattrocento, usually cut off smooth under the shoulders or under the bust, had their place on the moulding of the chimney or the doors. In the High Renaissance first, following Roman examples, they cut the bust only once, and placed it on a small pedestal which, on a higher stand, was put in the particular place in the room assigned to it. These stands, **sgabelloni**, were in the sixteenth century mostly carved out of wood and were formed of two narrow slanting boards, slightly diminishing at the top, that terminated below in lion feet. They are effectively decorated in more or less low relief and are held together by a flat shelf-like top. In all but the upper section it follows almost exactly the form of the **sgabello**, from which it has borrowed the name. Our illustrations (68-71) present a pair of effective examples

of such Florentine *sgabelloni* from the middle of the sixteenth century; the one with simple vigorous carving and deep in tone, the other decorated richly in low relief and lighter in tone, being gilded here and there. In the Cinquecento, a vigorously carved mask formerly constituted the middle piece of the decoration (Ill. 71). More rare are the painted stands, of which Ill. 70 shows a striking example, that originated in Rome, but is now in the Kaiser Friedrich-Museum.

The hand-glass, the most indispensable article for the satisfaction of human vanity, and for that reason made by the oldest of civilized peoples, often richly and artistically worked out, was throughout the Middle Ages a favorite piece. The wall-mirror, on the other hand, like the rarer stand-mirror (an extraordinarily beautiful example of which, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, we return to: Ill. 76), seems to have appeared first toward the end of the Middle Ages. The polished metal could, however, only be used in small pieces, and after the invention of the glass this also had in the beginning a very small surface, so that both at a certain distance and in a light not particularly strong, are undistinguishable, differing little from each other. The convex glass mirror, that in the North made its appearance at the beginning of the fifteenth century, known to all lovers of art, through Jan van Eyck's double portrait of Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife, was more suited to compressing into a small compass a picturesque view of the room than it was to reflect human features; it was quite unsuitable for use in the toilet.

- In Italy, so far as I know, wall-mirrors came in during the fifteenth century with the improvement of the setting and polish of the larger plates. In Florence and Venice they appeared almost simultaneously. The frames of the Florentine mirrors, very nearly related to the picture frames and like them in the richness and tastefulness of their composition, as in their perfection of style, are yet characteristically worked out. The frame enclosing the valuable picture is only designed to close it up and at the same time to mount it; it was proportionately small in the Renaissance, especially in Florence. The plate of the mirror, generally small (about 20-30 centimeters in height, the width being a little less) and not without its own charm, is also dazzling. It was on that account usually hidden by a painted sliding cover; so the mirror gets its artistic worth principally from the frame, that is proportionately large and as richly decorated as possible. How costly and how valued was the possession of the mirror at this time is evidenced by the fact that no other piece of furniture is so uniformly fine in its proportions, so delicate in its profile work, so choice and so finished in the drawing and carrying out of the ornamentation, as the mirror of the sixteenth century.

A considerable number of these mirrors, some excellent specimens of the kind, are found in the collections of Paris and in single examples in the museums, notably in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Of these illustrated here, one (Ill. 74) is characterized as a work dating from the beginning of the High Renaissance. It shows, not only in the style, with interchanging high and low relief and strong and weak ornament, but in the classic working out of the

same, that the wood-carvers, in their art hardly inferior to the contemporary sculptors, constructed such pieces. The unusual and at times peculiar motives, quite freely worked out, that slip into the decoration of the top, especially when it is light and hence particularly rich, betray the same imagination and sentiment that was disclosed in the earliest work of the pioneer masters in the plastic art of the High Renaissance, pre-eminent among them, Andrea Sansovino. All the coiled serpent forms, and naked putti whose limbs come out of flaming vases and whose hands hold flames, every upright shield, every serpent or fish form with human masks, string course of rolled up volutes, and similar inventions, that followed a preference for heavy allegorical representations under the influence of the discovery at that time of ancient Grotesques in Rome—all these, in a close resemblance, we find in Andrea Sansovino's altar niche in S. Spirito in Florence, in his monuments in S. Maria del Popolo, Araceli, and other places. They present a singular mixture of immature, fantastic motives in exaggerated, unconventional forms of decoration, into which a wild Baroque element seems to slip; but through the predominance of beautiful, effective contours, and through the modest subjection of the heterogeneous details, in the whole effect they mostly escape the eye. It is a characteristic sign of the soundness of the craft of the artistic element at this time that these heterogeneous motives were quickly rejected or only used in a conventionalized form.

The vigorous, over-laden forms of that part of the Renaissance before considered, under the influence of Michelangelo, appeared in the small wall-mirrors with as advantageous an effect as those of an earlier time, and become, through the fine toned color of the wood, the gilding of the higher parts and the deep bronze colored tone due to time, so increased in importance that it is comprehensible that these pieces have for decades been bought up with great partiality by the most difficult and the richest of collectors. The mirror in our illustration, formerly in the possession of the Kaiserin Friedrich (Ill. 75), is a good example; it still has its old cover in the form of a picture in the style of Vasari. On a similar simple mirror (Ill. 73) this cover is of wood with intarsia.

The chimney-piece held its important place during the Renaissance and consequently often reached in the palaces and villas a rich and artistic perfection; its fitting up, however, remained, in Florence, very simple. While in Venice the andirons (*alari*) were rich constructions of bronze terminating in a figure, those of Florence, as in the Middle Ages, were commonly of iron and comparatively simple in form. Yet they are beautiful in construction and often of a very fine finish in a restrained style, as are also the tongs, shovels and other fireplace fittings, that are handled in the same way. Unusual luxury in carving was expended on the bellows, the decoration following very closely the character of the carved chests in the style of the younger San Gallo, of the Tassi, of Baccio d'Agnolo, and others. Especially beautiful examples are shown in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum (Ill. 77 and 79).

The clothes rack, *attaccapanno*, or *capellinaro*, was also very artistically set up by the Florentines. Many remain from the sixteenth century; from the fifteenth century I know only one, that was formerly in the possession of

Stefano Bardini; judging by the armorial bearings on it, it belonged originally to Duke Federico of Urbino. A board arranged for hanging, with four turned clothes hooks affixed to it, is framed with very much stretched consoles on the sides, that support the vigorous moulding and rest on a small ledge which serves as a lower finish. The decoration is of simple intarsia in which the great Montelfeltre coat-of-arms that occupies the middle space is worked out in detail. The capellinari from the Cinquecento are in construction essentially the same, only they are lower and generally broader, enabling them to hold a greater number of delicately turned wooden pegs for the reception of clothes and hats, as our illustrations (80 and 81) show. The framing corresponds substantially with contemporaneous picture frames, and like these, it is occasionally relieved with gold. Some lac dyes that are from time to time brought into the armorial bearings increase the richness of these characteristic pieces that on account of the taste of the Florentine artist-craftsmen are particularly notable (Ill. 81). A distinctive type of furniture—the reading desk, **leggio**, found a use at times even in the living-rooms.

We must also bring out another piece from among the house furnishings of the Renaissance: the bed, **letto, lettiera, or lettuccio**, as it was in its old large form commonly called. It belongs among the most important of the furnishings of the Renaissance and has been correspondingly handled. The bed of a married couple of high rank stood in the wife's room, the beds of the married sons and daughters, in the rooms assigned to them. In the wife's room the extraordinarily capacious bed was a real "mobile immobile" that, exactly as in the Middle Ages, extended chest-like to the floor and had a high tread-board or a low bench running around it, that was fitted up as a chest. All these things made this feature so important that the effect of the apartment of the mistress of the house was determined by the bed, as was that of the reception room by the throne or the cassapanca. While from the Trecento a simple painted bedstead, rich with figure decorations, is preserved in the Ospedale del Ceppo in Pistoja (dated 1337), for the later Quattrocento the bed in the Palazzo Davanzati (from Citta di Castello—sold in America?) offers almost the only fully preserved and very characteristic example. Contemporaneous pictures and illustrations present us with rich material for clearing up the history of beds in Tuscany during the Renaissance. I recall a pair of the best known frescoes in Florence; for the Quattrocento, Ghirlandajo's "Birth of John the Baptist", in the Novella; for the Early Cinquecento, Andrea del Sarto's famous composition with the same subject, in the fore-court of the Annunziata (compare Ill. 26). In keeping with its size and immobility the bed was, even in the advanced High Renaissance, simple and mostly straight lined in form and smooth in decoration; later this was restricted in general to a few intarsia ornaments, in the Cinquecento to modest decoration in carving. The baldachino also, that in Venice, for example, was seldom lacking, with its sumptuous fittings over the head of the bed, seems to have made its first appearance in Florence in the course of the sixteenth century. It was then customarily supported on four pillars, and a painting adorned the cover.

Occasionally, however, in the later time, extraordinarily sumptuous beds were constructed, especially for princely personages. These were sometimes inlaid with costly woods, ivory, and even with precious metals, sometimes carved richly or set off with small pictures by eminent painters. Such pieces came into the palace with the outfit of the bride and were then its principal show piece, judging by the description of such (as house furniture quite common) bridal beds by Vasari and others of the time. Mentioning a bed of the sort, that Pier Francesco Borgherini commissioned Baccio d'Agnolo to carve and Andrea del Sarto, Pontorno, Granacci and Bacchiacca to paint, Vasari relates a story about the wife of its possessor, Margherita Acciajuoli, that in the absence of her husband she energetically refused the high offer made by the agent of Francis I of France for this sumptuous bed, for the king.

A small couch on short turned feet, resembling the modern chaise longue, is one of the same type, transmitted through the Rococo; but in its fittings, with mattress, under-bed, pillows and sheets, it is exactly like a bed. This appeared somewhat after the beginning of the sixteenth century. Its plain form was designed to promote comfort and its fitting up was entirely an affair of the upholsterers. Not one remaining piece is known to me, yet we see it quite often in paintings by Giulio, Romano and Titian, and in Marc Antonio prints, etc. With the bed the cradle also came out in the Renaissance. The examples in the Kunstgewerbe-Museen in Cologne and Berlin give a good idea of their artistic conformation.

The walls in the rooms of Florentine palaces and houses, as in upper Tuscany, were at the time of the Renaissance as a rule smooth, and decorated with different kinds of flat designs, such as came to light when the old houses of the Mercato Vecchio were torn down, and as they appear in the restoration of the Palazzo Davanzati at Florence. We find panelling only very exceptionally, while walls hung with stuffs were equally rare. The walls of the sleeping rooms were occasionally covered with hangings of small animals' skins pieced together, though only in winter, for warmth. Only the wealthiest could in the sixteenth century enjoy the luxury of a tapestry wall covering (hung only for entertainments), as French tapestries and those from the Netherlands were very costly. Even among the Medici possessions in the fifteenth century these were included only as rarities, the inventories show. Oftener the Gobelins were used for backs to the benches, *spallieri*, and as curtains to the doors, *usciali*; they were for the most part decorated simply with small plants and animals, with coats-of-arms woven in. The art of tapestry weaving spread into Italy in 1430, through weavers from Flanders who were first called to Venice and Mantua. Soon after the middle of the fifteenth century tapestry weavers from the Netherlands, who had settled in Ferrara, came for a time to Florence from Siena, where they had worked for six years, but during the whole Quattrocento the work carried out here was insignificant and small in amount. Later the revolution in Florence prevented any development of the Gobelin industry. With the idea of founding a Gobelin factory, Cosimo, in 1545, summoned the Netherlanders Nicolas Karcher and Jan Rost from Ferrara. Thanks to the interest of

this prince the factory was quickly brought into a flourishing state; what they made at that time is far superior to contemporaneous productions in other parts of Italy, and is in design as well as in color, quite original. The distinctive tapestry character is better preserved in these than in the picture types of Flanders Gobelins of the fifteenth and particularly the sixteenth centuries. The wall tapestries that are preserved in the Galleria degli Arazzi of the Archaeological Museum in Florence and those in foreign countries, that were executed by Karcher from cartoons by Bacchiacca, Bronzino and Fr. Salviati, offer an interesting retrospective view of wall decoration, especially in Florence. The decoration is at its best when it consists of ornament; such work is fantastic and delicate in construction, light and soft, with its colors on a golden ground, showing technique at times of the highest perfection. These, especially of the two Bacchiacca rooms, that are among the most sumptuous and finished, equal, on the whole, anything in tapestry work that has been created. Related, but even lighter, is the drawing of the decorative paint and plaster ornament of the ceiling, and the similar painted glass in the windows. Lastly, Oriental carpets, possessed in greater or less number by every prominent Florentine house after the fifteenth century, complete the color effect.

In spite of their large and vigorous forms and the considerable space they occupied, certain pieces of furniture in the Florentine rooms of the Renaissance had a tendency rather to enhance the spacious effect and the architectural proportions of the room; this was because of their straight monumental form and the fact that they were suited to their position against the wall. The rich and colorful composition and equipment of the floors, ceilings and walls, that in their light hues and delicate drawing strengthened the large and roomy effect, gave to the furniture a remarkably distinguished and magnificent appearance. The painted walls, occasionally with panelling decorated in gay colored intarsia, or covered with textile, the vaulted blue tinted ceilings of the ground floor rooms, the painted and gilded wood ceilings, and floor of mosaic in colored stone or in Robbia tiles, were during the whole fifteenth century in keeping with the furniture, inlaid as it was with different woods, and gilded, painted, or fitted up in gorgeous colored stuffs. In the sixteenth century when the walls were covered with the restful Gobelins and later with textile fabrics, when the ceilings were constructed of brown wood lighted up with gold, only rarely painted, or the white vaulting had a light decoration of painted plaster, and when the floor showed a simple pattern of mat colored stone flags, the wood of the furniture retained its own color, only made a little deeper by toning, and occasionally lighted up with fine toned gilding. For this reason it was enlivened with strong profile work and projections, as well as through carving, and made, with the rich colors of the cushioning, pillows, covers and carpets, an effective contrast.

We can with difficulty form a conception of the individuality and variety of the richness and the sumptuousness of a Florentine palace or a Florentine villa, or of the repose and harmony of the whole, because of the lack of architectural and color sense from which our time still suffers in spite of ostensible

progress; for such rooms, in their perfection, unfortunately no longer exist. Complete old rooms and house fittings, like the Swiss rooms that the Swiss Landesmuseum brings out in such considerable numbers, have not been preserved from the same period in Italy, nor were they rescued in time by the museums. The few attempts to reconstruct such rooms in the museums have generally been made in modern apartments spoiled by unfortunate proportions and decorations, and it has usually been done by throwing together smaller and more or less ruined pieces from different parts of Italy, belonging to different periods, in a careless and overloaded arrangement, if not in the manner of a shop. Far happier is the design of the Palazzo Davanzati at Florence, with truly antique decorations and real untouched furniture, mostly Florentine of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century. The truest picture, however, that we can have is that obtained from the representations of these things in the frescos, paintings and illustrations, even if they are generally treated as accessories and are too incomplete.

Almost until the close of the High Renaissance Siena maintained its independence against its old rival, Florence, in the art of furniture making, in spite of the relationship, as completely as in high art. Unfortunately little remains in its place and position, and what has come into the dealers' hands has been sold from Florence, and generally passes as Florentine. Siena is especially lacking in enough furniture of the fifteenth century for us to lay hold of, but since the house furnishings of the sixteenth century were in kind and form very closely related to those of Florence, we may well assume that the same is true of the earlier time. In the Cinquecento the furniture of Siena was characterized by a large and fine simplicity and severity of form, with richness and originality in ornament. Siena had at that time architects like Peruzzi, and wood carvers and decorators like Barile and Marrina; such, and similar artists have influenced the decoration of the furniture of their native city, and have themselves occasionally made it. The richly carved (unfortunately much worked over) casket by Barile, preserved in the Town Hall (Ill. 85), is as fine in construction as it is in ornament. Characteristic in form and decoration of a somewhat later time is a chest embellished with delicate intarsia, with the Piccolomini arms, in the Kaiser Friedrich-Museum (Ill. 84). That the throne also was not unknown in the large palaces is indicated by a striking piece that is now in the possession of the Berliner Kunstgewerbe-Museum. It is richly gilded on plaster ornament against a blue-toned ground. The Hebraic inscriptions on the panels, that shine through the later painting over, betray the fact that it came from a synagogue (Ill. 86). The old bench is missing and is replaced in the museum by a later chest of about the same size. The ornamentation in the style of Lorenzo Marrina shows the origin of this throne to have been Siena. It is believed to have been constructed for one of the palaces and later presented to a synagogue. It seems to me more likely that it was in the first place designed for the latter, as the church throne that came over from the Gothic period, and the Bishop's chair at the side of the high altar, furnished models for similar

pieces in the Tuscan palaces. The nearly related form and similar decoration, as well as the castor, which is found on church furniture in the cabinet work of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, make this seem probable. Paintings and miniatures show that also in the Gothic period the throne, even without decorations, was recognized as a piece of house furniture.

From among the Sienese credenze of this period the Kaiser Friedrich-Museum has a three-sided piece of about 1530-1540 (Ill. 89) that in its unusually fine proportions and profile work, as in the very effectively disposed, delicate, almost purely architectural ornament, clearly indicates the style and art method of Peruzzi. A somewhat later, two-sided credenza often appearing, is not quite so fine on account of the stronger projection of this ornamentation. A good example is shown in Ill. 59. As closely related are the Florentine and Sienese tables of the same period, as the table three meters long, from the Palazzo Palmieri in Siena, bearing the arms of the family, proves (Ill. 87). This is now the property of H. V. Sickart, of Vienna. On a writing cabinet of about the same period (approximately 1540) we find characteristic ornament of a similar kind, while the writing tablet is decorated with intarsia. Among the cabinets from Siena a few have been preserved that give us an idea of the painted furniture, as Vasari described it. Such was the three-sided painted cabinet for arms in the Palazzo Davanzati; the decoration in a design which included weapons was painted in Sodoma's workshop (Ill. 90).

The furniture of the Renaissance in Umbria on the west side of the Apennines, especially in Perugia, has a Tuscan character but with an individual stamp. Yet, like the Sienese furniture (since it also has not been recognized as such when it has fallen into the dealers' hands) it has been little studied, so we must limit ourselves in characterizing it. The Tuscan influence is felt in the same degree in the furniture that, according to indications, originated in the Duchy of Urbino, which, having a close political connection with Florence, fell more under her influence at the time of the Renaissance than did Siena. Duke Federico entrusted to prominent Florentine artists the decoration of the rooms of his new palace, in which admirable wainscoting with intarsia is still preserved in its place and position. Among a few noteworthy chests, put together with smooth boards and decorated only with separate, very simple, geometrical ornaments, either burned in or inlaid (Ill. 92, Bardini Collection, Florence), another type survives from the Middle Ages. A small casket of the same time (Ill. 15) and a unique commode, similar in construction to the credenza (Ill. 91), follow the Tuscan model in the simple palmetto decoration in carving and intarsia, of strong slightly peasant-like composition. In a clothes rack, with the arms of Duke Federico (Bardini Collection), the same style is shown in the form and in the intarsia in a finer way.

VENICE AND THE MAINLAND

The subordination of Venetian furnishings to the Venetian dwelling-house is particularly striking. Because of the position of Venice, in the midst of the sea, on a number of small islands cut through by numerous canals, these have a very peculiar form and ground plan, which has its effect in turn on Venetian furniture. On this account it differs more or less from that of the rest of Italy.

The house of the noble like that of the wealthy Venetian stood, and stands today, with its front on a canal—where possible on the Canale Grande—with its back toward a street. It has an entrance on both sides; the main entrance is, however, on the canal, as the gondola furnishes to Venice its only means of intercourse. The street entrance led through a small court or close by it. These entrances open on both sides into a long low vestibule, that runs straight through the whole house from the canal to the court; on each side are the rooms devoted to household affairs. The stairs go up at one side, not quite so narrow but almost as steep as those in the palaces of Florence. These lead to the main floor, which is disposed in the same way. Over the entrance hall, or rather corridor, lies, in the same form and dimensions, the large main room, generally higher than on the ground floor and much lighter, as it is closed at both ends with high windows in arcades: a vestibule for the small connecting living-rooms on each side, and at the same time a reception and entertainment hall, the favorite abiding place of the Venetian, and suited to him, with its long sides embellished gallerywise with paintings and Gobelins. In the story above are the bedrooms and other connecting rooms. In the oldest and most contracted parts of the city the stairs had their place in the court, as an open stairway, or tower-like with winding steps going up to the highest story.

Simplicity and roominess, which were the characteristic features of this plan, were reflected proportionally in the house furnishings, during the Gothic period as in the Renaissance, the Baroque, and the Rococo. The antique fitting up of the rooms in the Doge's Palace and in certain schools, as well as in a few palaces—of a later period, indeed—gives us today a fairly true picture of the Venetian palace of the Renaissance. No built-in furniture, no great pieces or established groups, hindered a comprehensive glance or free movement, especially in the large main room. The furniture was more often restricted to the walls; it ran around the sides in the form of benches, mostly attached to the wainscot, or as chests, while tables and beds rested against the walls in the bedrooms. Over the benches the walls were hung with long low Gobelins in an all-over pattern of verdure and finished above with a border. There were, with all kinds of household utensils for daily use, candlesticks, lamps, boxes.

vases, etc., for the rich; for scholars and art amateurs, all kinds of small art creations, old and new, with instruments, books and similar possessions. Large paintings or Gobelins decorated the walls of the salon, a small mirror or a painting those of the other rooms; before everything there was in these rooms a "Grecian" Madonna in a rich tabernacle, with a small lamp and a costly silk curtain before it, which also shielded the mirror.

When we attempt to find out about these pieces of the Renaissance period in detail we encounter extraordinary difficulties. While we can refer to a hundred Florentine chests of the fifteenth century, while tables and credenze are yet preserved in considerable numbers, and of other kinds of furniture of the Quattrocento at least one or more can be found, for the period from the Middle Ages to this time, we have nothing to say; so far as I know, with the exception of a few mirrors and small fittings of the kind, hardly a piece remains. And yet the equipment of the Venetian houses was, as the carefully made inventories left behind prove, unusually sumptuous. Venice has, thanks to its position, almost entirely escaped plundering, earthquakes, ravaging fires and the like misfortunes, that in other places have wrought fearful havoc among art works and furnishings. How this complete lack of all furniture from earlier times can be explained, is a puzzle. For the deterioration of the city and of almost all its families since the Napoleonic era does not alone offer a sufficient explanation for this state of things, since the old furniture, that until the middle of the nineteenth century was almost entirely disregarded and worthless, would have been, under such wretched conditions as those of Venice at this time, the more likely to be kept in their attics or even in continued use. Probably it was due much more to the fact that up to the time when she lost her power, Venice was rich and flourishing, exhibiting the greatest luxury; in consequence she played a similar role to that of Paris from the time the decree went forth that the house also should always be fitted up in modern style; hence old furniture was generally banished, after which it rapidly went to ruin. But even so, it is difficult to understand why—to mention only one example—of the many thousand chests, decorated with painting, carving, or inlaid work, that according to the inventories in the last decades of the fifteenth century were in the Venetian houses (in every house of a family of any standing there were one or two dozen of these mentioned in the inventories), only a very few are preserved.

As in the Florentine house, so in the Venetian, the most important piece of furniture is the chest, the *cassa*, or the *forzier*, as it was called in Venice. Truly it played here a more important role than in Florence. We find in the inventories of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries ten or twelve, sometimes twenty or more, chests mentioned, and even partly described, but with them hardly a table or so much as a chair or stool. It may be in part because this everyday furniture, especially in the Quattrocento, was so plain and worthless that it was not particularly specified. But it is evident what importance the chests had at that time and that these before all other pieces they loved to have finished artistically.

In fact the chest represented in Venice not only the wardrobe and commode, but also in part the chair and table. Venetian chests were as a rule low, with a flat top, and were used as benches to sit on; occasionally, however, they were very high, and then they were used as tables. The paintings and woodcuts give a good idea of both. The conventional scant handling of the woodcut at the end of the Quattrocento gives the furniture only in a very modelled and rudimentary form; for the details we depend on the short descriptions in contemporary inventories and on conclusions drawn from the chests that we have from the Cinquecento and contemporary Tuscan pieces, respectively. To go by these, the early Venetian chests, when they were artistically finished, which in the houses of the well-to-do often, if not mostly, was the case, were either painted or decorated with inlaid work, the first, as a rule. The usual chests showed the arms of the owner and had ornamentation on a colored ground, the finer ones being decorated with figure compositions. The rarer intarsia chests, generally high and rectangular, were used as tables for the reception of small objects, or to rest the hand on (compare Ill. on page 7). Carved chests were apparently rare in Venice until the beginning of the Cinquecento, and they are found first in the last decades of the Quattrocento. As far as we can judge by somewhat later pieces of the kind, and from the Venetian frames of the end of the fifteenth century, these were embellished with delicate flat candelabra and leaf ornament; yet, as in the frames, this was worked out in plaster instead of in the characteristic carving that had been the rule. This is shown in a number of beautiful chests with plaster ornament, that must have originated in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and are now in the Kaiser Friedrich-Museum and in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Ill. 94-96). The jewel chest was particularly rich in execution. An excellently preserved piece from the beginning of the Cinquecento, Gothic in its outside decoration, is in the possession of the Berliner Kunstgewerbe-Museum (Ill. 93).

Next to the chest comes the low bench attached to the wall, as the usual seating furniture of the Venetian. In the hall and in the great room over it these run along both sides, and there is a similar arrangement in the living-rooms and bedrooms. Even at banquets they sat on these narrow wall benches, the dining-table being drawn up to them. One long side toward the middle of the room was unoccupied in order that the servants might bring on the food more conveniently. With these, sgabelli and stools are found only sparingly and of simple form and execution; in the kitchen and the bedrooms they were generally covered with woven straw and not seldom in the rooms even of the palaces. The tables were equally simple, as a rule only boards laid on trestles, and covered with linen or Oriental carpets that might be removed at any time. Large tables seem to have appeared first toward the end of the Quattrocento and are related to the Florentine tables (Ill. 98). After that, through Sansovino, Florentine art exercised a stronger influence over Venetian art craft work, and the forms of the tables also resembled those of Florence more closely (Ill. 99 and 100).

With this movable or provisional furniture there were, as we see in the

illustrations, certain sumptuous pieces, chairs as well as tables, that were found in the houses of some of the most prominent families (Ill. 101). Several show pieces of the kind are known to everyone from Carpaccio's painting—St. Jerome in his Study (Ill. 102). They have a very delicate appearance, as they are mostly built of wood and metal together. The work-chair, with a small writing-desk before it is built entirely of wood; it is, however, wholly covered with a red material and richly decorated with brass knobs and balls. The small writing-desk and its stand are constructed in the same way. The work table, at which Jerome sits, has one side against the wall (so that it may be put up) supported on bronze consoles, the other side rests on a very delicate, richly jointed bronze leg. The top, like the bench and the platform, is covered in stuff and decorated with gilded bronze nails. Models related to these are found in other Venetian paintings, especially in those by Carpaccio. Similar work-chairs, wholly of metal, seem, from the single pieces preserved from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, not to have changed materially since the Trecento. They have the usual X form, the legs and arms being of iron, sometimes covered in stuff; the balls, feet, and joints are of brass or gilded bronze (compare Ill. 102).

Furniture of this kind was as rare as the iron carved chair of Germany in the sixteenth or seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, or the silver tables and chairs that adorned the rooms of state in the town residences of the princes in Germany and in the Northern kingdoms.

In the inventories of the time, that mentioned each chest, often giving a short description, only exceptionally a table or a few chairs appear. Thus in 1473 we find in the inheritance of a rich silk merchant twenty-three chests and only four chairs. The plain stools and chairs had doubtless, as already mentioned, been passed over. All this shows, however, how important it was to the Venetian, even more than to the Florentine, to keep the apartment roomy and unencumbered, placing the furniture, as far as possible, close to the wall or attached to it. Hence we do not find during the fifteenth century in Venice, so far as I can see, even the rudiments of a cabinet, aside from the wall cupboard—open or without doors—that was used for every sort of utensil and also for books. The credenza, even, does not appear at this time, nor yet before, at least not in its perfected form, but only as a construction used for food, etc., like the dining-table put together with trestles, boards, and framework, and covered with linen or textile.

The most important piece in what was properly the living-room of the family was, as everywhere in Italy, the bed. Hardly to be classed as furniture, truly, being so large and massive that it must have been practically immovable. In form and fittings the bed of the Venetian seems to have differed very little from that of the Florentine. The head stood against the wall, while a step ran around the remaining sides; this was high enough to be used as a bench and as a chest. The stringboards were finished in rich profile work, higher at the back, while the whole structure was richly fitted up and crowned with a baldachino over the head. An excellent picture of a living-room with a bed, in a house of

some pretensions, is shown in a painting of the end of the fifteenth century, by Carpaccio.

Among the sumptuous pieces the mirror was a great favorite in Venice toward the end of the Quattrocento. These were of polished metal, therefore small, but generally in elaborate broad frames and were shielded by a curtain of fine—usually Oriental—material. In Venice the round form, that was rare in Florence, was preferred; the frame, with rich, delicate plant forms in low relief, carved or pressed in a mould, were as a rule gilded. According to the examples that we have (these also are from the transition of the fifteenth to the sixteenth centuries, though they have a Quattrocento character) the decoration of the mirror corresponds exactly to the Venetian frames; both were certainly made in the same workshop. The mirror being a rarity, probably because the preparation of the polished metal was costly, it follows that only one was ever mentioned in the inheritance inventories, and that they are not even found in all the houses of wealthy people.

Another piece of wall furniture that was peculiar to Venice, is the **restello**,^c the rack. In the inventories it was often mentioned, occasionally also in the wills, and from the description we see that it was a particularly valued piece and that they took care to have it constructed in a most sumptuous manner. Like the mirror, the restello was rare, and more than one was almost never made for the same house. Unfortunately until now, only one, of Lombard origin, is known to us; it is in the Bagatti collection in Milan. It has a half Gothic form, so we are left very much in doubt as to the usual form and finish of the restello. We owe what information we have to the highly praiseworthy investigations of Dr. Gustav Ludwig, concerning the art and culture of Venice. A significant piece of this kind was owned by the wealthy painter, Vincenzo Catena, which was decorated with small allegorical paintings by his master, Giovanni Bellini; it is now in the gallery of the Academy of Venice. Originally the mirror was attached to the **restello**. On the border that closes it below, stood small antiques, bronze figures, candlesticks and the like, while under that were hung at first, richly ornamented toilet articles, later, astrolabes and vessels used in the Mass, as we see in St. Jerome's Study, by Carpaccio (compare III. 103). Here the mouldings in the room in the foreground, as well as in the small back room, run around, forming the finish to the textile wall covering that takes the place of panelling, while the restello was properly a wall piece that hung between paintings in the main room, so that the useful objects standing on it might be close at hand if needed. We see something resembling this in the well known portrait of Jorg Gysze, by Hans Holbein, in the Berlin Gallery. As a last offshoot of this furniture we have the dainty hanging shelves to consider; these are usually made of three boards resting on slender turned columns. From Italy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we have quite a number, and similar ones appear among us, in Germany.

For the Cinquecento we are better informed about the house furnishings in Venice also, as a quantity of examples have been preserved, though by no means in such great numbers as in Florence. As with painting and especially

with sculpture, art handicraft retained the style of the Quattrocento for two or three decades almost unchanged, the only difference being a richer construction. The methods of decoration in use among the Lombardi, a family of sculptors and architects, determined also the ornamentation of furniture. The chests, like the mirror, and frames of all kinds, are covered over with delicate plant ornament, as the young Lombardi, Antonio and Tullio, had perfected it. The wall-back of the benches and the covering over the doors are made of fitted Gobelins (the so-called verdure, with armorial bearings between small flowers or bushes); Asiatic carpets bedeck the floors and lie over the tables, while Oriental objects of all kinds, intermixed with bronzes of Paduan and Venetian origin, ornament the shelves, as well as the door and chimney cornices. Paintings that in earlier times were isolated and generally kept more as devotional pieces, now hang in greater numbers on the walls, though indeed there are even now only one or a few portraits, a Madonna picture, and occasionally a mythological or allegorical composition. Picture galleries were in the first half of the sixteenth century yet unknown in Venice; the few collectors sought before everything to bring together antique statues and other antiquities, small works of art and curiosities of different kinds; with these only a small number of paintings and large carvings appeared.

The wall tapestries that in large numbers decorated every fine house in Venice were manifestly, the great majority of them, of Netherland origin; the arms of the families, that many of them bear, are not woven in, but embroidered on, which method was first used in Venice. Of the earliest "verdure" that has been preserved to us and that has come from the different palaces of Venice and its environs, only rarely is a piece ascertained to be Venetian work. From representations of such wall tapestries that we see in contemporary paintings, especially by Carpaccio, we can best learn about their arrangement. Large Netherland tapestries, *arazzi*, were at that time a great rarity and were at first devoted only to the embellishment of churches and public buildings. In the course of the Cinquecento we also find them, and indeed in whole series, in the living-rooms of the Venetian merchants. With the Gobelins a wall covering of close woven material of one color, made of a mixture of linen and wool, was very much used in Venice, where they covered the lower part of the walls, that in the North at this time was frequently panelled in wood, and later in Italy also. Rich materials, especially the deep red velvet, came into general use in the course of the sixteenth century; this gave to the rooms a remarkably sumptuous and an unusually comfortable air, as the deep, almost neutral tone was not in any way obtrusive. On the other hand we find leather wall covering in Venice from the middle of the Quattrocento; it was called *cuoi d'oro* because gold was the color most in evidence. This, with the richly gilded wood ceiling, must have produced a splendid effect.

A change in Venetian art craft took place in the fiftieth year of the sixteenth century, through the infiltration of Florentine art, especially following Jacopo Sansovino's arrival and settlement in Venice after the sack of Rome in the year 1527. The change was made at first slowly, then fast and fundamen-

tally, until cabinet art, as it had developed in Florence under the influence of Michelangelo, acquired the mastery over Venetian houses. Painting was almost entirely given up; in the place of the delight in color and preference for rich gilding came the principle that the value of the natural color of the material should be brought out, well toned, indeed, and with a sparing use of gold, but this only with thorough toning. The forms were brought out more sumptuously and the decoration consisted principally of carving in strong relief, worked out with mixed ornament of fantastic masks, scrollwork and figure compositions.

Requirements increased and pretensions grew greater, in consequence furniture was more varied and more numerous. We find armchairs and side chairs, as well as sgabelli, in a richer form among the wall benches. The bed especially, was grandly set up, with richly carved string boards and voluminous curtains. The chests too, remained in number and richness of ornament—generally through vigorous carving—the most important piece of furniture, though they did not so invariably occupy the foreground as formerly.

Characteristic are the cassette—small chests and caskets. In the late Trecento the workshop of the Embriacchi, in Venice, had already produced jewel caskets of bone or ivory with rich figure compositions representing ancient sagas and romances of the Middle Ages, which, all over upper Italy, were the most sought after of house furnishings. In the sixteenth century similar caskets, mostly for the safekeeping of feminine ornaments, were among the principal features of a lady's room. While in Florence they were carved in walnut in a vigorous manner, with classic ornament, and only occasionally gilded, in Venice they were painted: on a lacquer-like, dark, usually blackish ground are small color compositions brought into a cartouche-like framing, the corners of which are filled with fine gold ornament; the handle on the top, the sides, and at times the feet as well, are of gilded bronze, and are of the most delicate form (III. 96). This is the same kind of decoration that we find in Venice, at the time, in small frames designed for miniatures, and as it appears in a like manner in book bindings.

Musical instruments, though not before considered, acquired in the Cinquecento a certain importance in house furnishing, through the perfecting of the clavichord, which had in Venice an unusually beautiful and artistic shape. The wing-shaped body of fine light wood was placed in a larger case embellished with painting and set up on slender legs; this was cut so that the ornament of the inner body might be seen. Several such clavichords, among them one formerly belonging to Alfonso II of Ferrara, are in the Berliner Kunstgewerbe Museum (III. 101a), and in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Almost all of this furniture is in form and decoration little divergent from the contemporary Florentine furniture, that at times served as a model; what has been said of that is equally true of this. Yet certain particularly characteristic Florentine pieces, like the cassapanca and the throne, did not become naturalized in Venice any more than they did in the rest of Italy. Chairs and armchairs, as well as the sgabello (rarely found in Venice) have, as in Florence

a high, narrow shape. The tables, now more numerous, are at times very fine in shape and of a considerable size, such as the five-meter long table of Paduan origin, in the Kaiser Friedrich-Museum (Ill. 100), that yet holds the old reddish toning and the partial gilding. The ornamentation of all these pieces of the middle and the second half of the sixteenth century, although nearly related to Florentine furniture of this time, is more picturesque in construction and effect, richer and more inclined to the Baroque.

* The fittings of the fireplace, that in the fifteenth century in Tuscany and practically in all the rest of Italy were regularly of iron, showed in the sixteenth century a preponderance of bronze and brass, and were often finished in a costly way. The *alari*, andirons for holding the logs, were adorned in front with statues a half or a third of life size, that stood on elaborately constructed socles, set out fantastically with masks and other ornaments. These were at times executed in the workshops of the first sculptors in bronze of Venice, and they belong today among the most sought after and the highest priced small bronzes of the Renaissance. Fire tongs and shovels were relatively plainer, though decorated in a similar way. Bellows also in richly carved wood seem to have belonged, as in Florence and Rome, to the equipment of the fireplace of the Cinquecento (Ill. 77-79). That the most sumptuous, the most characteristic and important pieces, as they adorned whole suites of rooms in the princely palaces, have not been preserved, is shown by some designs for furniture from the late Renaissance, as they are found in the collection of drawings in the Uffizi, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and others, also as we occasionally see them in pictures. I will refer in this connection only to the painting of the Ferrarese, Scarsellino, of about the year 1580, in the Pitti Palace, representing a bed fitted up sumptuously in a way that suggests Florentine furnishings, as they are known to us through Bronzino's paintings.

* In Florentine furniture the inlay was of marble and semi-precious stones, here it is only painted, the relief inlay being of imitation cameo, but evidently by an eminent artist, perhaps one of the two Dossi, who again and again painted just such bed frames for the house of Este. The small bronze table by the bed is almost a true picture of a small Roman table. We find furniture resembling this in other pictures by Scarsellino (various paintings in the Borghese Gallery in Rome) showing a partiality for interiors richly fitted up in the style of the time. Probably these were state pieces that were in the possession of Alfonso I in his palaces at and near Ferrara; we can probably ascribe their construction to Venetian artists or those under Venetian influence, if only because the furniture itself was either made in Venice, with whose artists and craftsmen the court of Ferrara was very actively connected, or Venetians were taken to Ferrara for the purpose. In any case these give a characteristic picture of the Venetian furniture of the middle of the Cinquecento as it adorned in like manner the grand rooms of the Mantuan palaces.

Venice, in the transition from the fourteenth to the fifteenth centuries, had at length overthrown Padua and then in a quick career of conquest swept over Northern Italy between the Alps and the Po beyond Udine to the east,

and to the other side of Bergamo on the west, and at the same time, though hotly contested, overrunning the strip of coast on the sea as far as Ancona. This whole "terra ferma" was, consequently, at the time of the Renaissance, very dependent upon the ruling city in art and craft work. From Padua, that for a century had possessed the most flourishing foundry in Italy, came most of the small bronzes owned by Venetians, while many of the chests, tables, chairs and frames, designated in our collections as Venetian, came from Verona and Brescia. Until long after the middle of the Quattrocento and on, domestic Late Gothic furniture seems to have persisted, resulting in the bringing out of a very distinctive mixed style. The characteristics of this furniture are the great simplicity of its form and profile work and the decoration through ornament and figure compositions etched or carved in the flat. The ground was painted in order that the compositions might have a more striking effect; presumably the relief was brought out with gilding or color originally. The chests and small caskets, the latter generally of cedar, etched inside and out, show, usually, representations of festivals, allegories, mythological motives and, more rarely, religious compositions which, from the costumes, must have appeared about 1425-1475. Since they are now as a rule colorless and much worn, they are, owing to the flat handling of the etching, not particularly effective, while originally they must have had a very fine appearance (Ill. 103). A pair of very interesting examples of the chairs of this time are in the possession of Dr. Albert Figdor, in Vienna. They are two large folding chairs made of broad boards with notched decoration; one is of Paduan origin (Ills. 104 and 105). Chairs, also of a later time, preserve many of their ancient characteristics, as a noteworthy armchair with fine imitation wickerwork ornament shows. In these chairs and chests a Longobard tradition has certainly persisted.

From Verona especially, numerous chests are preserved, dating from the end of the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century. They are of a longer shape, with a flat top, the sides (excepting the unornamented one) decorated with painted or plaster ornament. The front is generally divided into three parts and painted with small allegorical or mythological compositions in landscape, or in the delicate leaf ornament in gilded plaster or painting, that betrays the school of the Lombardi. On the sides arms are painted, when they are not on the front (Ill. 106).

From the later period of the Renaissance there is a remarkable number of chests, chairs, tables and credenze in the villas of the principal families of Venice, Verona and Brescia, on the Lago di Garda, and in the neighborhood of Brescia; what pieces of this kind come into the dealers' hands now, for the most part originated in this locality. These generally colorless pieces also exhibit Venetian characteristics. They differ from the productions of the city of Venice through purer, usually somewhat insipid, architectural forms and a rather dry handling of the decoration; the Michelangelesque style of Sansovino prevails very little here.

Mantua and Ferrara, whose ruling houses were famous throughout the Renaissance, even in Italy, for their love of splendor as well as for their taste

for the fine arts, had in the fifteenth century preserved a partially individual character though near Venice, but toward the end of the century the influence of the lagune city on the arts and crafts was growing constantly stronger. The High Renaissance had, consequently, an essentially Venetian character here, even in the fitting up of rooms. That these were in both places often extraordinarily sumptuous is proved by documents, and by the furnishings of the rooms, that are in part preserved. The Dukes of Este and Gonzaga had fitted up their castles more richly and luxuriously than the wealthiest Venetian noble would undertake to; such princely splendor the Doge, as representative of the Republic, might dare to display, but each citizen of Venice must hold himself always within the exact limits of the bourgeoisie; the whole body of citizens watched over this jealously, and sought by special laws to restrain the ever resisting tendency toward luxury. Of all this magnificence there are indeed from these two courts a large number of paintings and antiquities as well as miniatures, though scattered through the different collections; of all the furniture, Gobelins, and other valued household objects, there is only a small amount about which we have any information. This is the more to be regretted as we know through records that much of this furniture was constructed in the prime of the ruling families after designs by the most eminent artists, who participated in the work and instead of devoting themselves to the composition of pictures or sculpture, busied themselves more with all kinds of furnishings, stage settings and art trades, going as far indeed as to that pertaining to the wardrobe of their patrons and their suites, even to the horses, falcons and dogs. Even artists like Cosimo Tura and Dosso Dossi sometimes painted beds and other furniture, sometimes decorated horses' harness, made the scenery for a play, or provided decorations for a festival, at other times drawing designs for embroidery, Gobelins, costly materials, etc. The numerous and detailed records, particularly the archives of the House of Este, give us fuller and more precise information than we have from any other part of Italy concerning the intimate life of the Italian princes, the fitting up of their castles and other buildings, even to the form and construction, and the details of the different state pieces and furnishings. Excellent examples of this sumptuous furniture from the old princely possessions are the wedding chests of Paola Gonzaga, in the Museum of Klagenfurt, and a pair of chests richly inlaid with ivory, in the Graz Museum.

From the indications that appear on it, a writing cabinet that was discovered in Costozza, originating in the last days of the Early Renaissance, must go back to the Gonzaga family; it is a brilliant piece of finished inlay, with all the ornament carried out in the finest detail, though the delight in intarsia is manifested with little advantage in the whole unrestful effect. This comes out in the photographic illustration (III. 108 and 109) in an exaggerated way. The piece is now in the possession of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Concerning Ferrara we have many contemporary documents, also having reference to luxury in furnishings during the fifteenth century, but we cannot make a picture from these of the appearance of the pieces individually. The interesting frescos with representations from the life of Borso d'Este in the

Palazzo Schifanoja at Ferrara offer as little in this direction as most of the frescos of the Quattrocento in Italy, for the accessories to the figures were as a rule held in the background or given as simply as possible, if not—as in the old Ferrarese paintings of the throne of the Madonna and Child—quite fantastically depicted. The weavers, indeed, were all Netherlanders or French, even in later times. Netherland weavers were summoned to Ferrara by Niccolo III in 1436; under Leonello, and especially under Ercole I, this industry developed and became the most flourishing in Italy; under Ercole II it had another similar success toward the middle of the sixteenth century; under Alfonso, however, it declined and soon ceased to exist. Yet about a century later more than five hundred Gobelins were in the possession of these princely courts.

The long sojourn in Italy which these Flanders craftsmen made and the influence of the Italian painters, doubtless caused their industry to take on a strongly Italian character. This is shown plainly in a series of tapestries by Hans Karcher, who was the most eminent artist under Ercole II. It is possible also that the series sold at auction from the Spitzer collection, is his work. Often, though not regularly, these artists worked from designs by Italian, particularly Ferrarese, painters; Cosimo Tura in the fifteenth century and Dosso Dossi in the sixteenth century drew a great many designs for them. These designs soon far surpassed what was produced in Venice, for we find at that time great compositions of biblical or allegorical subjects, after the style of the old Flanders tapestries; a Gobelin of this sort in the Lenbach-House at Munich represents the Burial of Christ, and is woven from a cartoon by Cosimo Tura; in technique it is rather careless and clumsy, but has a very picturesque effect.

Contemporary works of art of the Late Renaissance, especially of the Ferrarese school, give us a reliable picture of the sumptuous furnishings of both courts. I have mentioned before (compare page 34) the paintings of the Ferrarese, Scarsellino, in which are found the likenesses of some of these state pieces that were probably made at this time for the fitting up of Duke Alfonso's castle, from drawings by eminent painters who also participated in the work. Simpler, but very tasteful, is a clavichord with the Duke's name on it. This is now in the Berliner Kunstgewerbe-Museum, and I have already gone over it incidentally in connection with Venetian furniture. The case, standing on three slender legs without decoration, has ornament painted in color on a dark ground, the inserted part, with the musical works, being embellished with intarsia of wood and ivory of unusually beautiful and not over-rich drawing.

From the pieces of cabinet work remaining to us from Bologna and the dependent Marches it appears that they were as characteristic as in Mantua or even in Ferrara. Bologna, influenced during the Renaissance in part by Florence and in part by Venice, nevertheless maintained a certain independence. As the Bolognese furniture of the seventeenth century was distinguished for its strength and the forceful management of the materials, through simplicity, good proportion and plain but effective profile work, so it has in the Renaissance a compact strength and adaptation to use, while in the High Renaissance it unites with similar qualities a genial grace and festivity. From the numer-

ous castles of the Ancona March, as well as from the Emilia, a quantity of furniture of this time has been brought to light by the art dealers, a number of examples coming, by this means, into the public collections. As most of these have been sold from Florence they are generally regarded erroneously as Florentine furniture. These pieces will not indeed serve to give us a superficial glimpse of the arrangement of the interiors of the castles and dwelling-houses of the Marches. What I have put together here on the subject is only a few notes on the characteristics of the furniture that seems to me to have an assured origin in Bologna and its environs, as I have seen most of them there or in the Marches.

After the fifteenth century we find in the Marches a quite distinct variety of chest that was certainly carried over from the Gothic period and seems to have been made, almost without change, until the middle of the sixteenth century. They have a short thick form, smooth, strong sides and top, are not much broader than they are high, and have by way of ornamentation only delicate filigree rosettes above and below on the iron bands, and a richly decorated lock. These seem more closely allied to the German and French chests of the time than they do to the Italian (Ill. 109). The walnut is in its natural color, only lightly toned, and has usually taken on a deep lustrous patina. The inside is not empty and unornamented, as was formerly the rule in Italy, but running around the sides are quite small, low compartments that close with a flap. These were for the reception of small objects, while clothing, tapestries and the like, were laid in the middle. As these chests because of their strong build are especially lasting, and on account of their good locks were very practical, a larger number of them were preserved in the villas; these locks were something quite unusual in Italian chests, for many of them, even among the most artistically executed pieces, in the sixteenth century also, had supplementary and rough locks bored through the decoration. On account of their simplicity and lack of ornament these chests seldom come into the museums.

In the beginning of the Cinquecento chests took their form and their decoration from the wood carver, Formigine, celebrated in Bologna, or at least from the tendency for which he beyond everyone else was responsible; for he is himself a mythical personality, to whom is accredited all varieties of the best wood carving of the time in Bologna. The Formigine chests come next to the Venetian chests of about 1520-1530. On lion feet, with a sarcophagus shaped top, they are without ornament excepting on the sides, which are decorated in rather high relief with armorial bearings in the middle and strong plant tendrils that spring from a dolphin or a caryatid filling the corners. They either have their natural color or are entirely gilded, as a perfectly preserved example in the Kunstgewerbe Museum of Leipzig shows (Ill. 110). These Bolognese chests lack the agreeable appearance that comes from light construction, fine contours and beautifully worked out decoration, as Bolognese art almost altogether lacks variety; when one has seen several pieces with the same motive repeated, one tires of them (Ill. 111). The diversity Florentine chests had, even in the sixteenth century, thanks to the Michelangelesque Bar-

oque decoration and its various mixtures with pure High Renaissance motives, is wanting in this work, that felt as little the influence of Michelangelo as did Bolognese art generally, although Bologna twice harbored the artist within her walls for a length of time, and witnessed here the production of various works of his.

With these, and later in the place of the carved chests with strongly relieved plant ornament, came, in the second half of the Cinquecento, chests without this carving, the sides receiving their embellishment through inlay. While intarsia work in other parts of Italy had already practically disappeared, it arose here in an individual manner; it would not, however, bear comparison with that older art of intarsia. As they filled a hollowed out design of thin ornamental forms with a whitish paste, they found a cheap substitute for the real intarsia (III. 112). Later they turned back to this, however, inlaying the dark polished walnut sides with lighter woods; but this itself was done lightly, as deepened lines in the ornament or figure composition mostly provided the shadows, making the effect quite picturesque. Bologna, whose art was outwardly flourishing and celebrated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, though living on older art methods, preserved classicism even in her chests up to this late period.

The tables of the Quattrocento in the Marches have rough strength and freshness in design and execution. They are of a typical form which they held until the middle of the Cinquecento: the strong octagonal or more rarely the round top of medium size rests on three stout legs terminating in lion feet, at the joining of which a pineapple is usually placed. The functions of support, weight and stability of the table could hardly be better or more effectively expressed than here. With the exception of the simple legs with lion feet these tables for the most part, though not without profile work, are otherwise unornamented, which increases the effect of strength (III. 113). Where delicate ornament is found in the lower part, under the top—which is the case with many of the pieces that come into the dealers' hands in Bologna—it is the work of falsifiers, who seek to beautify this simple furniture in order to make it sell better.

That the Renaissance tables in the Marches have regularly an octagonal form, that they are so strong and so heavily built, and are almost always of the same size (about one meter across and the same in height), has its ground in the build and fitting up of the castles and villas; yet we are as little informed about this, as about many other important questions relating to Italian art and culture. The young, newly established Italian State had to work so long and so hard to win its position and to organize its affairs, the greatness and splendor of Italian high art had drawn all eyes so exclusively to it, as well as absorbing all study, that such questions have not generally been considered. In the mean time, however, much of the material essential to any answer to these queries has been destroyed or scattered. So we lack any support for the determination of further examples of house furnishings in Bologna and the Marches and their connections. The writing cabinet illustrated here (III. 114),

that originated about 1530, came out of a palace in the Marches (Faenza or some neighboring place), judging by indications. It is simple in construction and decoration, of unusually agreeable proportions, and has ornament that exhibits the forms of the High Renaissance very clearly and delicately yet without any trace of Michelangelo's influence. It is of its kind, so far as I know, the only work that is so closely related to Florentine furniture of the time and sort that it must either have been the work of a Florentine or made under Florentine influence. Exactly this northern part of the Ancona March was from the beginning of the Renaissance almost a domain of Florentine art.

ITALY IN THE NORTHWEST

We lack also sufficient support for the making of a reasonably trustworthy picture of the disposition of Lombardy houses and of the single pieces of furniture from the period of the High Renaissance. The frightful devastation to which this particular part of Italy was exposed at the end of the fifteenth century and in the first decades of the sixteenth century, especially through the invasions of the French and later under the domination of Spain, resulted in thoroughly clearing out the older house furnishings. What is preserved in the Museo Poldi, in the Museo del Castello and especially in the palace of the Bagatti family in Milan, shows relationship with contemporary cabinet work of Venice, and indeed did not remain uninfluenced by her art. The furniture with ivory inlay is generally characteristic; because it was constructed in the neighborhood of Pavia it has been known as *mobili alla certosina*. Whether it really was at home here, or whether it was transplanted from Lombardy, is a question that remains unanswered. The circumstance that in the transition of the fourteenth to the fifteenth century the artist family, the Embriacchi, were working on their own particular chests, mirrors, altars, etc., of ivory carving with inlaid framework, especially for the Lombard rulers and people of rank, seems to indicate Venice as the home of this particular intarsia art furniture. The fact too, that in Near-Asia quite similar intarsia of a high finish was made, would point to Venice, since until the sixteenth century she was most powerfully influenced by the Orient in all her industries.

The older pieces of this kind, indicated as Lombard intarsia furniture, go back to the end of the fifteenth century. They are mainly chests (Ill. 115 and 116), Savonarola chairs (Ill. 118 and 119), small caskets and mirrors, more rarely also writing cabinets (117). The decoration is generally in small geometrical designs which are devised with much taste and laid on as a flat ornamentation. In larger pieces, namely in the chests, simple naturalistic motives occasionally appear, such as bouquets and flowers in vases, but always in a fine conventionalization. The furniture, to the advantage of the decoration, is always simple in form and provided with very small and modest profile work, so that the large smooth surface might offer an opportunity for bringing out the decoration. This plainness and the strong drawing of the inlaid ornament might lead easily to a too early dating of this work; a chair of the sort, which must have originated toward the end of the Quattrocento, was mentioned in the catalogue of the Gedon auction in Munich in 1884, as having made its appearance at the end of the thirteenth century or the beginning of the fourteenth century.

In the western border provinces, Piedmont, Savoy, and Liguria, a relation with France is plainly evident. In Piedmont and Savoy French-

Burgundian influence is unmistakable, as a quantity of good furniture from this province in the admirable Museo Civico of Turin and in some of the noted castles of Piedmont prove. That even up to the sixteenth century the Gothic tradition held here, is shown in the vigorous French forms. We can follow this best in the chests that alone are at hand in relatively large numbers (Ill. 124). It is otherwise in Genoa and on the Riviera. Here we see also in the Renaissance furniture a distinct relationship with the furniture of the south of France, namely, with that which had Lyons for its centre of production, though, it is true, this may be followed up only exceptionally until the fifteenth century when, expressing in general the Gothic characteristics of Liguria, it exhibits an elongated Gothic decoration. These pieces were little considered and their origin rarely known or taken account of; they are found in great numbers with the over-sumptuous Lyons furniture which the French and English collectors have preserved in quantity in their palaces, though they are generally inferior to these in richness and artistic finish of the decoration, as in the variety and fantasy of the design. In consequence they are in general designated as French, or when their Ligurian origin is assured, they are passed off as imitations of the Lyons furniture. The relation seems to me to be just the opposite: the Genoese furniture provided a model for that of Lyons; over the Riviera the Renaissance in cabinet work pressed toward France and exercised an appreciable influence over the development of this art in its southern provinces.

◦ Here in Genoa and on the neighboring littorale Renaissance furniture, though almost without exception from an advanced period, is preserved in proportionately greater quantity and of a greater variety than in the other western provinces of Northern Italy. The pieces have indeed strayed out into other countries and go now under strange names. The chests do not play the foremost role, as in the rest of Italy; in their place appears the cabinet in two parts, that elsewhere in Italy—as we have seen—was very seldom used as house furniture. If, and how far, the introduction of these pieces from the North has exercised an influence here, is at this time hard to decide, since we know so little of the cabinet work of Lombardy, on which this industry, like Genoese art in general, had been dependent since the Trecento. Netherland influences that at the beginning of the Cinquecento made themselves felt in Genoese painting, could not have been proportionately powerful in this direction, for aside from the difficulty of transporting things of such relatively small worth, the habits of life in the two countries differed too much.

◦ In the illustration we have a characteristic Ligurian cabinet, made in Genoa, that is now in the Museum of Magdeburg, and another that is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Ill. 120 and 121). They consist, as a rule, of an upper and an under part, of very nearly the same size, both having double doors. The structure is simple and architectural; the decoration on the other hand is very rich, but on account of its low relief is not obtrusive as it is in most of the Lyons furniture. The doors are each decorated as separate surfaces; the framework takes the shape of pilasters, socles and mouldings, and is

conventionally decorated; the locks and handles are here provided with ornament, mostly of a head with open mouth or something similar, and are toned. These cabinets are quite related to the contemporary credenze, among which is found the one illustrated, now in the possession of the dealer in antiques, Stefano Bardini, in Florence (Ill. 122). The Ligurian tables are also distinctive and more nearly related to those of the French than the Italian. The two characteristic broad feet are as a rule bound together by a cross-piece that serves at the same time as a base from which two slender columns arise; these support the top. Between these pairs of pillars runs a small row of delicately turned columns. A typical example of a Ligurian chair is shown in a Genoese piece that, with the twelve chairs that belong with it, is found in private ownership in Berlin (Ill. 123). They are distinguished for their rich iron work with large gilded nails, and their perfect preservation. The wood is unusually beautiful mahogany that was first brought to Italy at that time in Genoese ships, but for a time spread little into general use.

I should attribute to Genoa the origin of a noteworthy chest shown at Rome in 1885 in an exhibition of Roman furniture. It is quite distinctive, as the sides, formerly always straight or bowed outward, have a strong inward curve, like many of the sarcophagi. The base is very strong and high, the top being, on the contrary, flat. The palmetto design and the festoons display the soft full forms of the Ligurian furniture. This chest, originating in 1530, is of walnut, partially gilded.

ROME AND NAPLES

We may assume for Rome great luxury in house furnishings as in other things, from the fondness for art shown by a number of Popes in the Renaissance period, as well as from the great love of display and luxury among the papal relatives and the rich clergy, who sought through the use of their collected riches to increase as much as possible their fame and enjoyment during their lifetime. This is confirmed for us by the records for which we are indebted to the researches of E. Muntz, Bertolotti and others. Very little furniture is preserved bearing the indications of a Roman derivation, though many Roman pieces appear, of a date after about the second or third decade of the sixteenth century; almost all, indeed, of only one fixed variety, and this, chests. How the love of display among the higher clergy expressed itself in these is proved, among other things, by the description of the outfit that Lucretia Borgia received from her father, Pope Alexander VIII on the occasion of her marriage with Duke Ercole of Ferrara. For the transport of the wedding effects in the sumptuous chests, jewel caskets, etc., from Rome to Ferrara, a train of several hundred mules was required.

If we do not include Raphael's tapestries, there is hardly a piece of the old Vatican furniture or of that from other papal palaces left, or even known; but a suggestion of the artistic finish of these pieces in the living-rooms and the rooms of state, in the time of Julius II and Leo X, is given us by the splendidly carved doors and window frames in the Stanze. For the making of these rooms Raphael had called Giovanni Barile from Siena, while at the same time the younger Luca della Robbia put the paving stones of the floor in place, as they are yet preserved, though truly in a hardly recognizable state.

In this classic period even the earliest pieces approached that style of furniture especially characteristic of Rome: that furniture that is embellished with carving in high relief, in which the color of the wood is only lightly toned and only rarely gilded here and there. They conform essentially with the Florentine furniture, the work being executed for the most part by Florentine cabinet makers or under the influence of Florentine architects and wood-carvers. In Rome they held their individual character, being much less under the influence of Michelangelo than of Raphael. The high relief of the decoration on the front and the two small sides of the chests has, in conception, composition and modelling, the closest relationship with that found in the paintings of Giulio Romano, Polidoro da Caravaggio and others of the Raphael school. Since in the compositions chests even of the kinds that have been preserved, appear, the most of them two or more times, it is probable that the design for them can be traced back to such artists.

The compositions are almost exclusively borrowed from ancient and Roman

history or classical mythology. Most of them have invariably two rich reliefs separated by armorial bearings; occasionally the front has several small compositions of one or two figures, separated by pilasters or caryatids. On the smaller sides single figures, sea monsters, and the like, are generally found. The arms are as a rule in the middle, held by two putti or flanked by a pair of nude figures representing chained warriors. The latter is repeated with slight variations on a whole group of these chests. In a similar manner fettered barbarians in rich garments are brought into the corners; these are borrowed from Roman triumphal arches. Like these, many of the figures or groups are copied more or less freely from antique statues that were found in Rome at that time. The preference for Roman history and myth indicates Rome as the place where the greater part of these chests originated and the armorial bearings, where these have so far been determined, also confirms this opinion.

The Victoria and Albert Museum has the greatest number of such chests. Around the sides, against the walls of the old Hall of the Raphael cartoons, stand sumptuous chests of the kind, alternating with richly carved sgabelli that in their perfect preservation, old gilding and fine bronze colored patina, have an exceptionally good effect. The other large museums possess either one or a few of these pieces. Two that belong together, of especial excellence and preservation, with the old partial gilding also, are in the Kaiser Friedrich-Museum in Berlin, where as a decoration they ornament the hall, with Raphael's paintings. One of these (Ill. 125) has in two parts, separated by armorial bearings, a representation of the death of Niobe's children from the arrows of Apollo. A somewhat later repetition, with a different middle piece, and unfortunately less well preserved, has been taken out of the old Museum and put into the Kunstgewerbe-museum. A considerable number of these chests is found in private ownership in the palaces of England and France, especially in the houses of the Rothschild family in Paris. The great Paris auctions of Renaissance art works, as they were held by Fr. Spitzer, Baron Seillieres, and others, included many such pieces.

When these chests stand against our walls they generally have a low, heavy effect. This is because now they usually lack the substructure, which raised them up very much and at the same time protected them. We refer for this to the illustration of an old Florentine chest with the under piece that goes with it; this is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Ill. 3).

The chests, in their vigorous forms, rich carving, and partial gilding, correspond with the rest of the furniture used for the fitting up of the Roman palaces of the High Renaissance. Sgabelli form the majority of sumptuous pieces of this kind, of Florentine-Roman derivation, made especially for Roman furnishings. Proportionately numerous are the carved bellows, still used as an ornamental piece among the fittings of the fireplace. Among the museums the Victoria and Albert Museum has again a quantity of these, and indeed unusually splendid ones (compare Ill. 77-79), the rest may be sought in the palaces of England and France that are fitted up with Renaissance furnishings. Only a few tables of a like character have been preserved in Rome; they have been,

almost without exception, sold outside the country (Ill. 127); among them a large and splendid piece, of marble with bronze decoration, from the Palazzo Massimi, the design of which is ascribed to Peruzzi. One of the most beautiful pieces of the kind, shown in Ill. 128, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. An unusually fine writing-cabinet which appeared in Stefano Bardini's sale in London, 1902, gives an excellent idea of these pieces; according to the armorial bearings it was made for Cardinal Farnese (Pope Paul III). What is true of all the sumptuous pieces of this kind is noticeable here, that the side pieces, profiles, and details, are not carefully worked out like the large sculptured piece set in the front. The discriminating taste shown in the simple furniture at the beginning of the Cinquecento and from the second half of the Quattrocento, is seldom met with here. A writing-cabinet, similar in character, incidentally suggests Florentine furniture (Ill. 130, compare page 17).

So far we have no reliable information as to who the artists were who designed or carried out the work on this variety of furniture. That they were natives of Florence seems, considering the character of the work, indubitable; whether the pieces came out of the workshop of the younger Tasso, or from that of Baccio d'Agnolo, or others mentioned by Vasari and in the records of certain wood-carvers, is as yet impossible to decide. They have so uniform a character that they could have been distributed only among a small group of artists closely related with each other. Most easily recognized is the workshop of an artist who by preference brought out children and childrens' heads, in very robust forms. Since reliefs in Florentine sandstone, mostly with partial gilding, exactly corresponding, come from Florence, this master is doubtless a sculptor and a Florentine. That we must seek among these artists prominent architects like Peruzzi, Antonio San Gallo and others, is indicated by the numerous sketches for furniture that have been preserved, especially from the Cinquecento (particularly in the collections of drawings in the Uffizi, the Victoria and Albert Museum and others). In the High Renaissance the separation between artist and craftsman, the designer and the artisan who carried out the design, was in a certain degree complete, especially where there was a question of handling very sumptuous and uniform decoration.

Research among the records has brought out testimony that in Naples and Sicily also, a rich and various cabinet work flourished. The splendor loving court of the Aragon rulers seems to have found particular pleasure in fitting up palatial rooms with costly furniture rich in artistic expression. These princes kept their art collections in expensively made cabinets. But specifically Neapolitan furniture was, so far as I know, recognized first about the middle of the High Renaissance. The few pieces of the kind are very similar to the Roman pieces just described; they are richly provided with strong heavy profile work and the deeply toned wood has a beautiful patina.

In the course of the sixteenth century the political and public life of Italy underwent a complete transformation, in that the dominions of small tyrants were changed into principalities in the modern sense, and republics, aristocratically ruled Venice in particular, vanished. In the place of the ruling

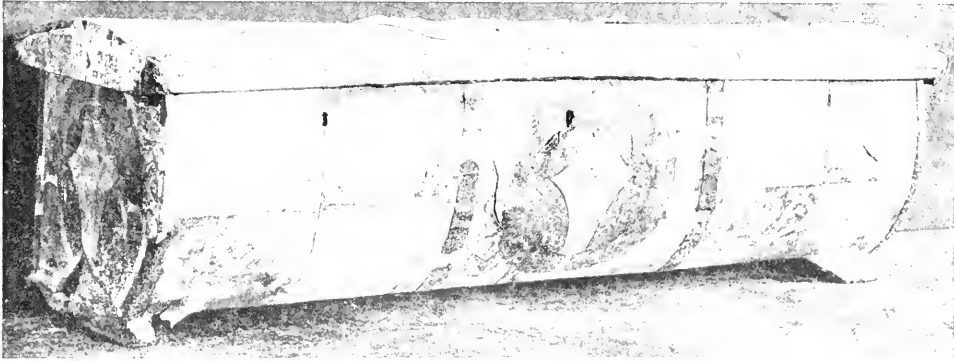
towns, on whose prosperity the development of the Renaissance depended, came the princely courts, from that time determining the forms of life and affecting also the furnishing of the houses. The new requirements to fit the different circumstances, the demand for representation in splendor and luxury, made themselves felt plainly also in the whole arrangement of the houses and in all the furnishings; while some furniture was put in the background or entirely disappeared, other quite new pieces came to the front. The wall bench and the chest were displaced by furniture for seating of a different sort; the commode came up as a new variety of furniture, quickly causing the chests to disappear; the tables were more numerous and more various; the mirror became the important feature of the room, as, with a table underneath for a support, it had the effect of a large superb piece, reflecting the furniture around it and doubling the splendor of the room. Another novelty, the chandelier of crystal and glass that, hanging from the ceiling, often in large numbers and in the richest settings, lighted the rooms, increasing their regal brilliancy, making them shine in fantastic lights, was very different from the quiet, scarcely adequate, lighting of the Renaissance period. The bed was relegated to a small room and frequently occupied a very deep niche, the alcove. In short, modern furniture was born in Italy, truly no longer through its own power but under strong influence, especially from France. It is a way of furnishing that only recently, through the demands of hygiene for light and air and through practical inventions, has been essentially changed.

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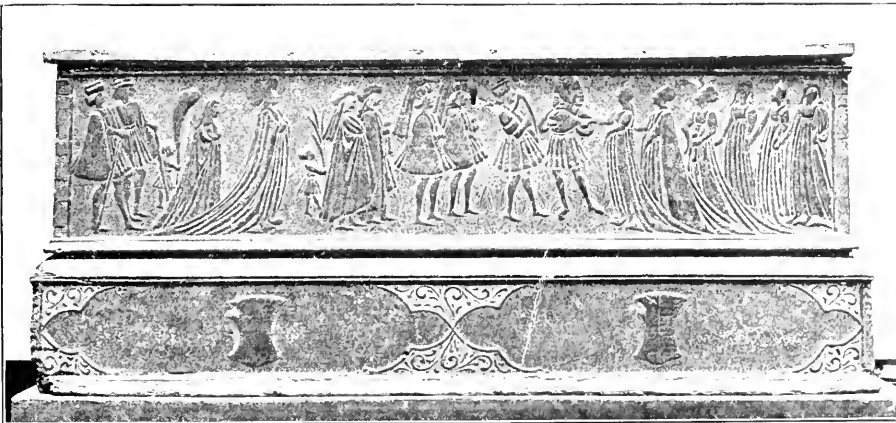
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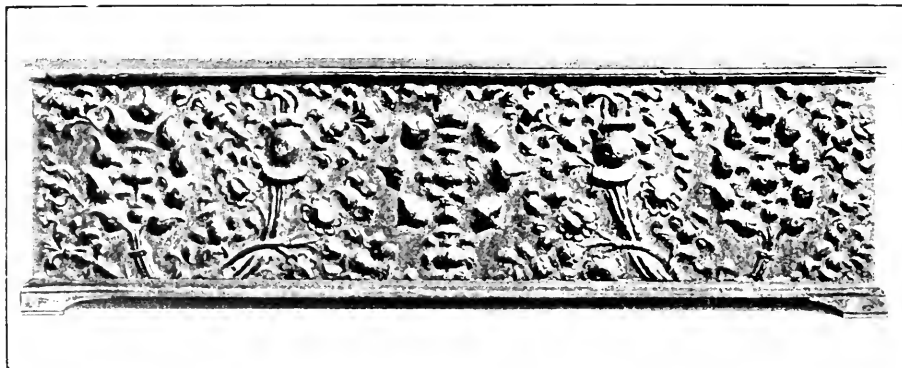
1. Florentine Painted Cassone about 1410–1420. Bargello Museum, Florence.



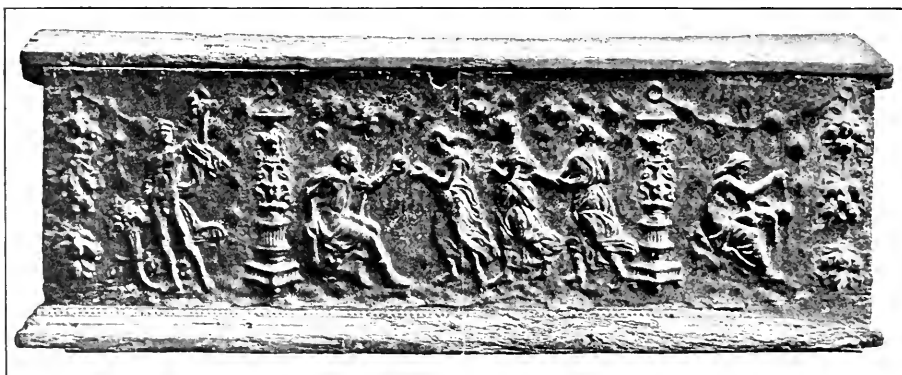
2. Florentine Cassone about 1440. In a Private Collection.



3. Tuscan Cassone with Gesso Work about 1440. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



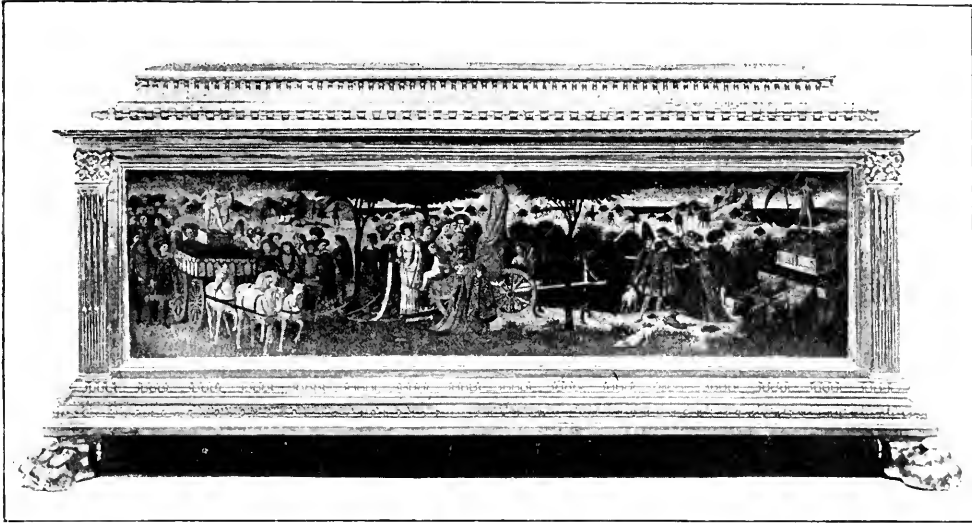
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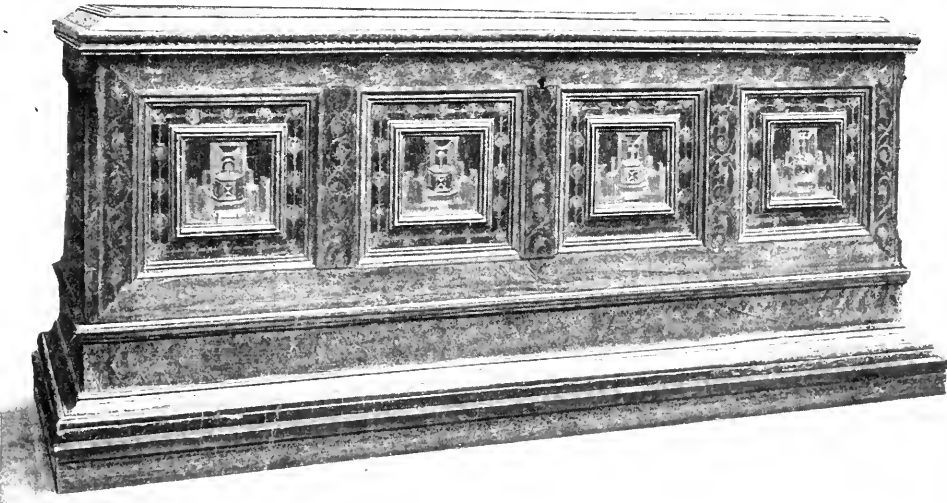
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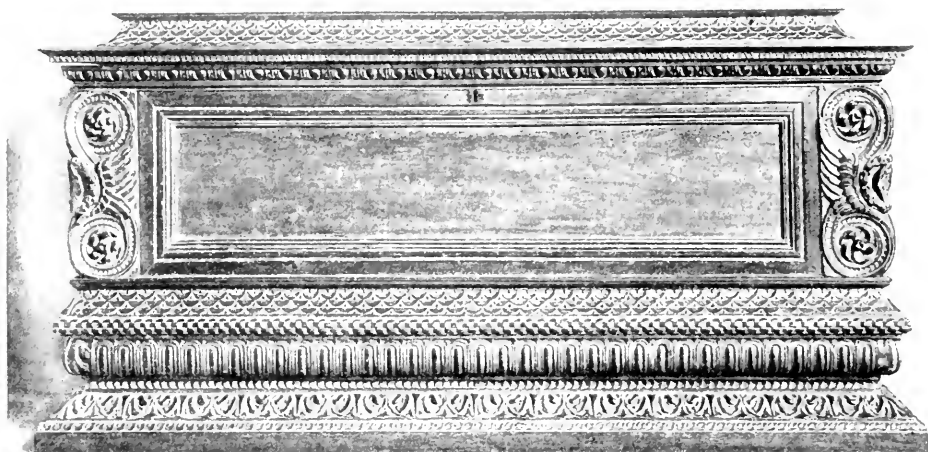
6. Florentine Cassone about 1440. Formerly in the Bardini Collection, Florence.



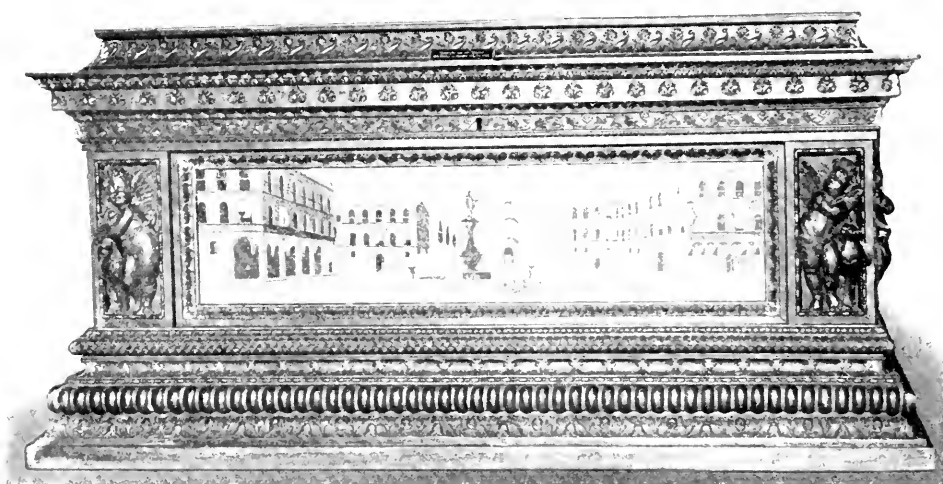
7. Florentine Cassone about 1450. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



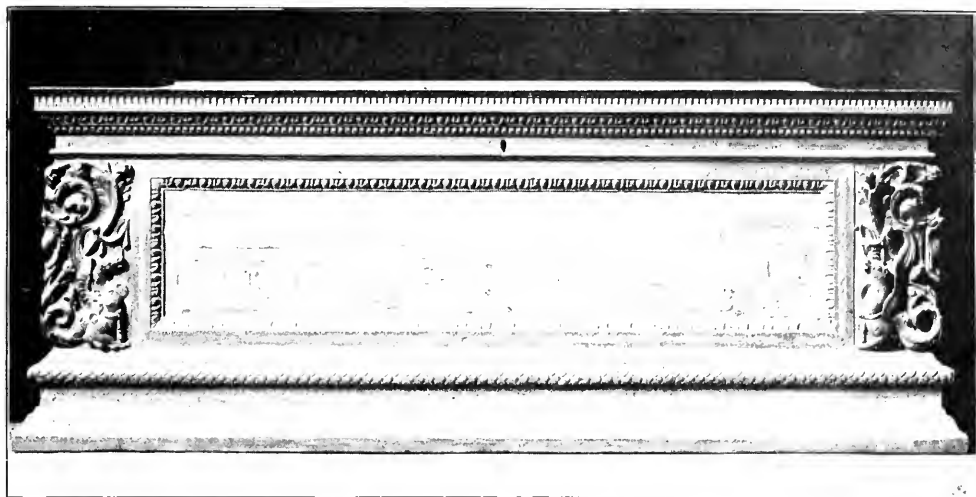
8. Florentine Cassone with Intarsia Decoration about 1480. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



9. Florentine Cassone about 1480. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



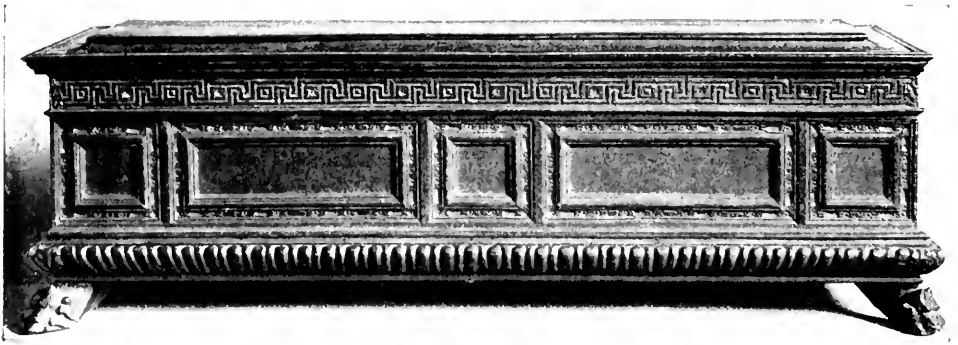
10. Florentine Cassone of the "Strozzi Family" 1507.
Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Berlin.



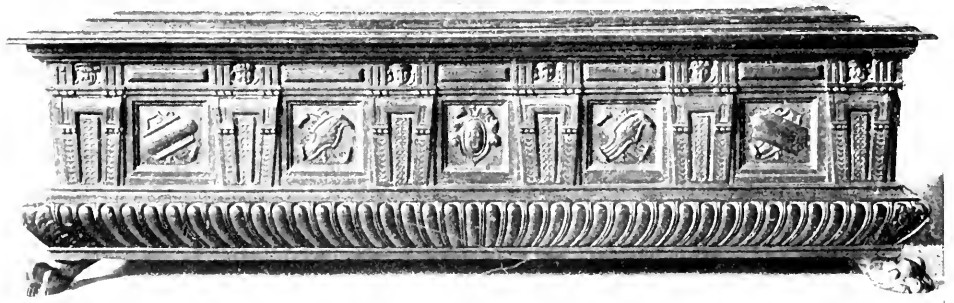
11. Florentine Cassone with Intarsia Decoration about 1905
Prince Liechtenstein Collection, Vienna.



12. Cassone of the "Albert Family" about 1530, Musée André, Paris.



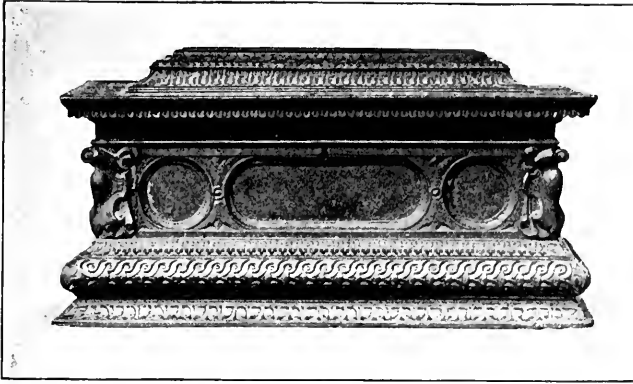
13. Tuscan Cassone about 1580. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



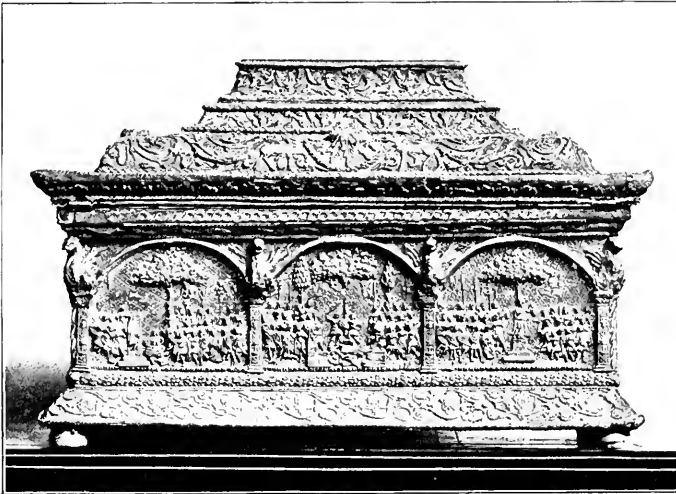
14. Tuscan Cassone about 1575. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



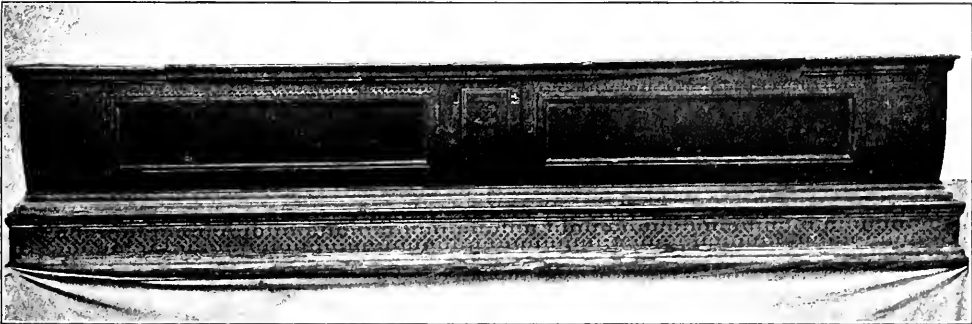
15. Tuscan Casket of the 15th Century.



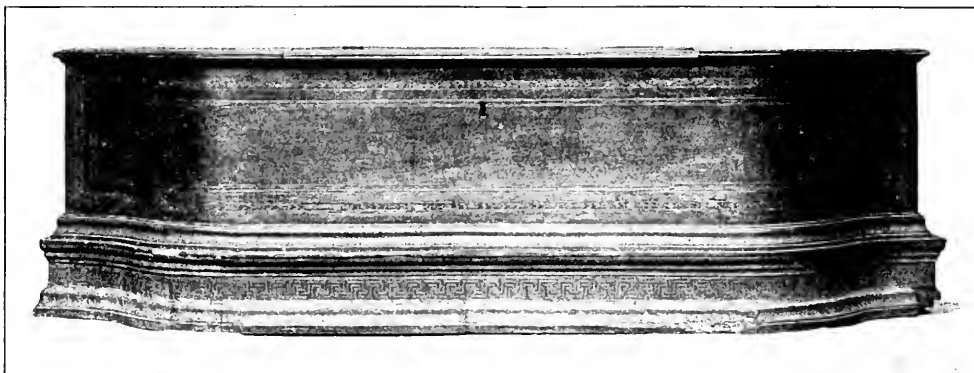
16.
Florentine Jewel Casket about 1525. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



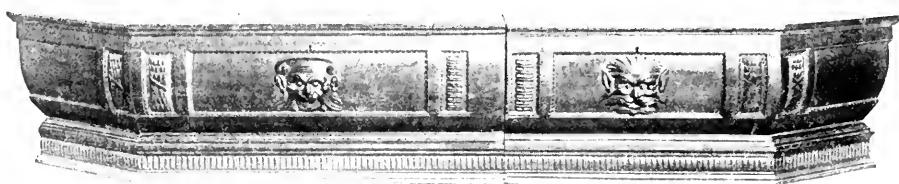
17.
Florentine Stucco Casket with Pastiglia Decoration. Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Berlin.



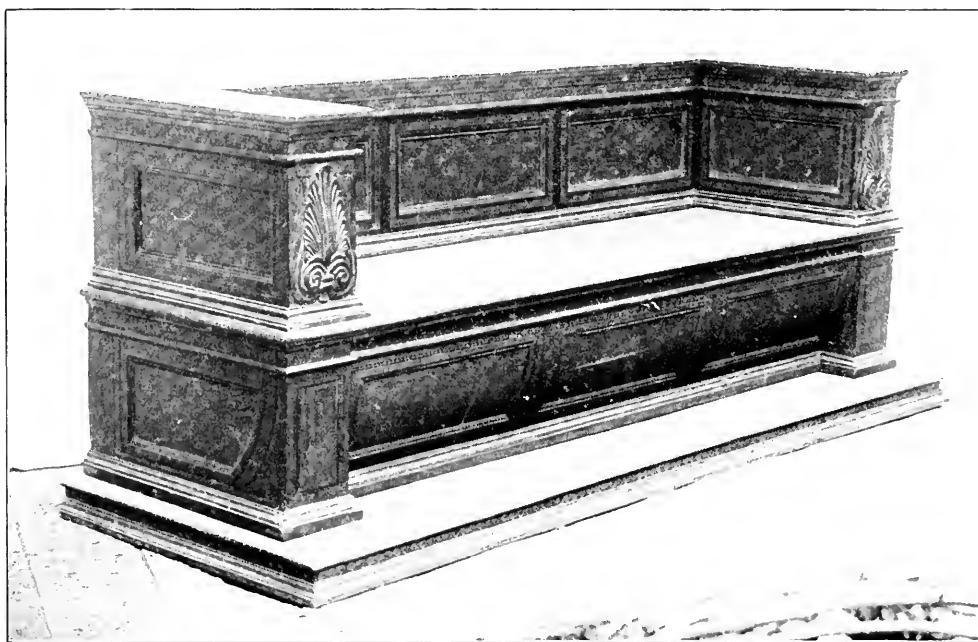
18.
Florentine Bench end of the 15th Century. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



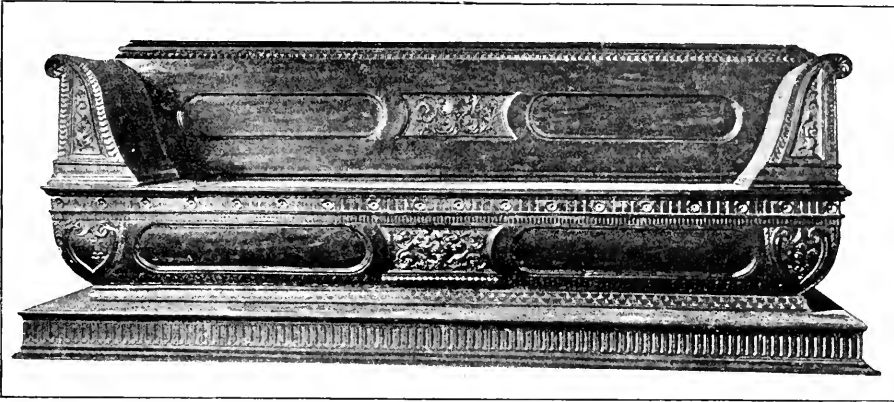
19. Florentine Bench about 1475. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



20. Florentine Bench about 1550. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.

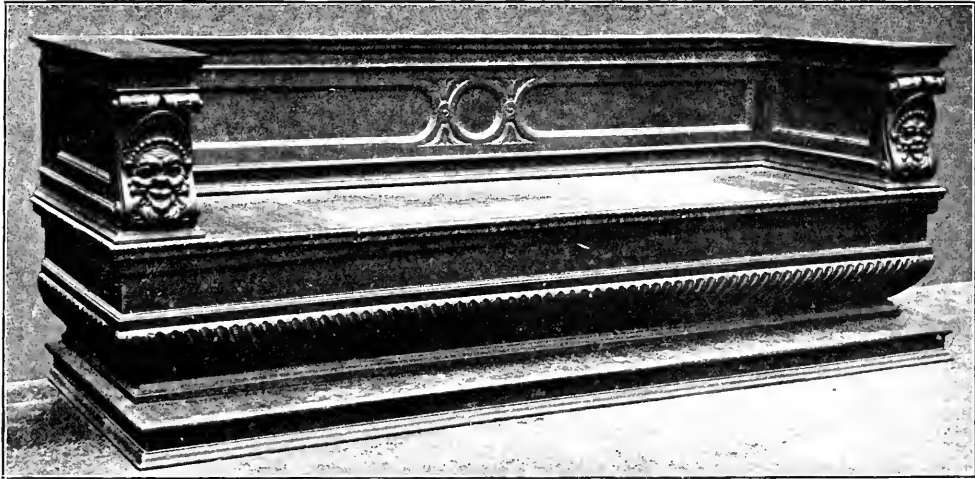


21. Florentine Cassapanca with Inlaid Intarsia Decoration, E. Volpi Collection, Florence.



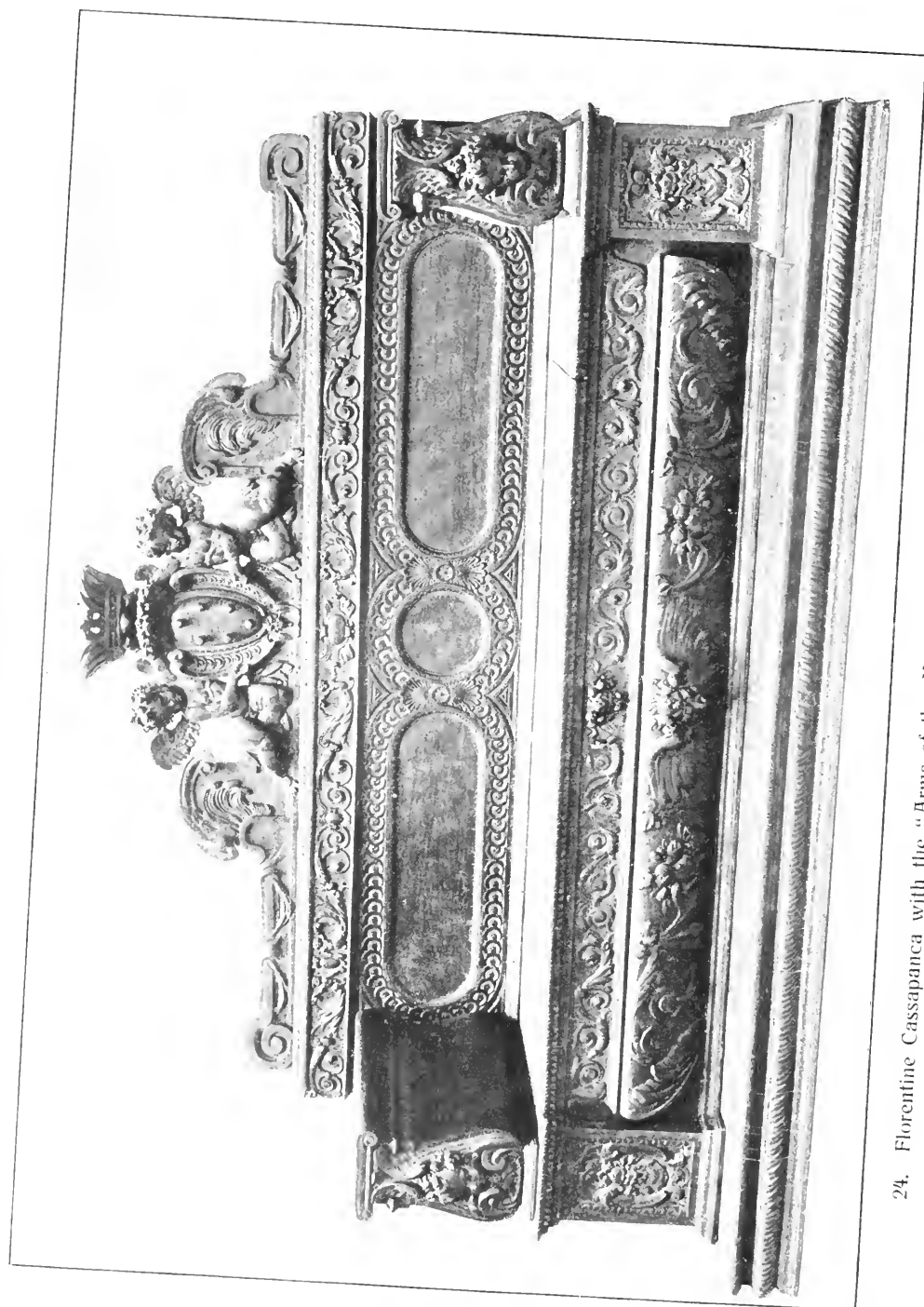
22.

Florentine Cassapanca. Bargello Museum, Florence.

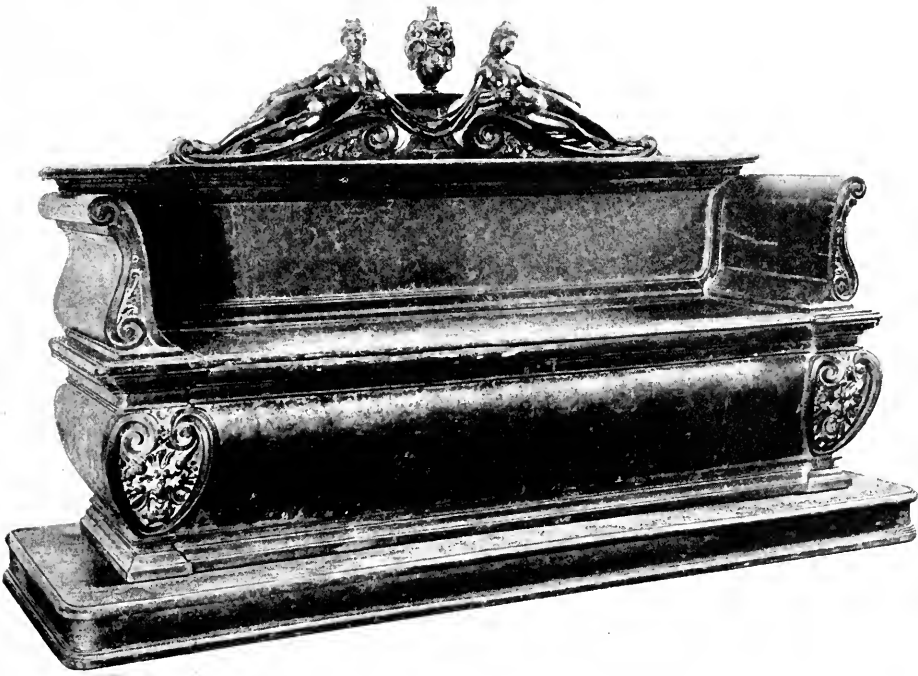


23.

Florentine Cassapanca. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



24. Florentine Cassapanca with the "Arms of the Medici Family." M. Jules Porgès Collection, Paris.



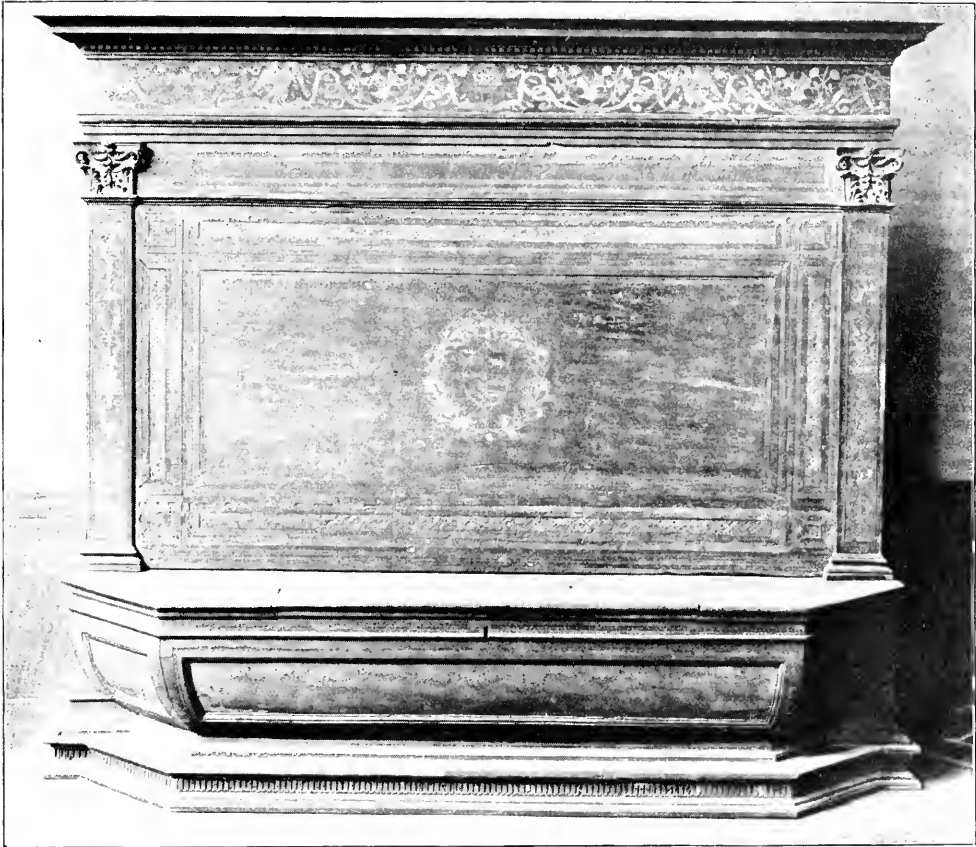
25.

Florentine Cassapanca. Davanzati Palace, Florence.



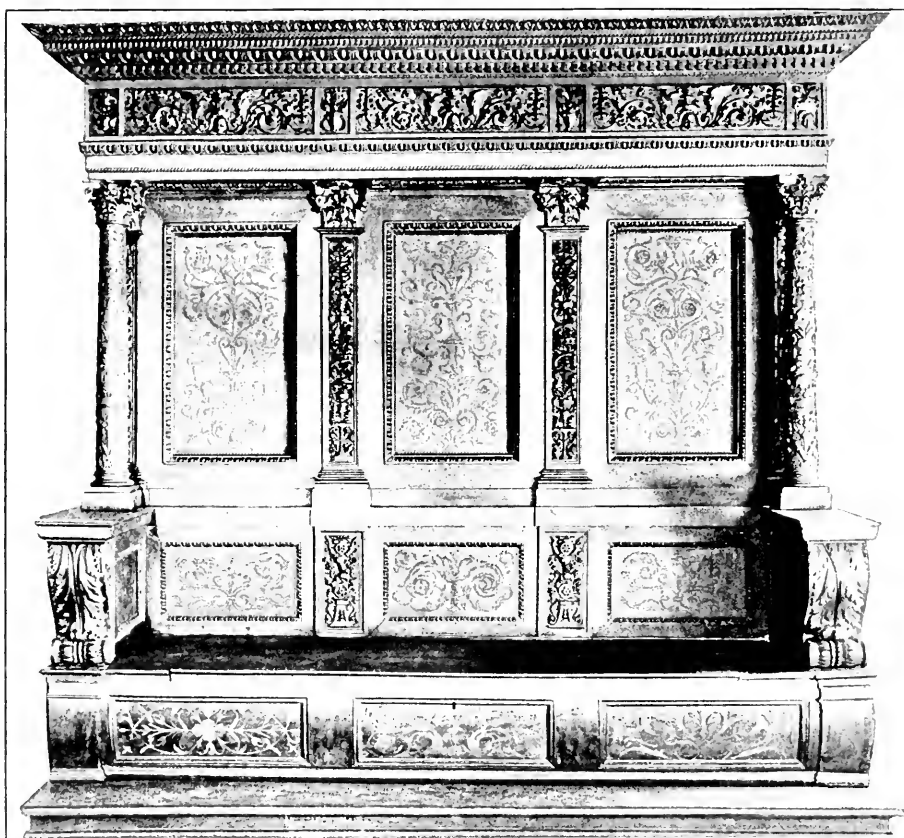
26.

Florentine Room with Throne and Bed, High Renaissance Period.
From a Fresco by "Andrea del Sarto" at Florence.



27.

Throne of "Filippo Strozzi." Baron Moritz Rothschild Collection, Paris.

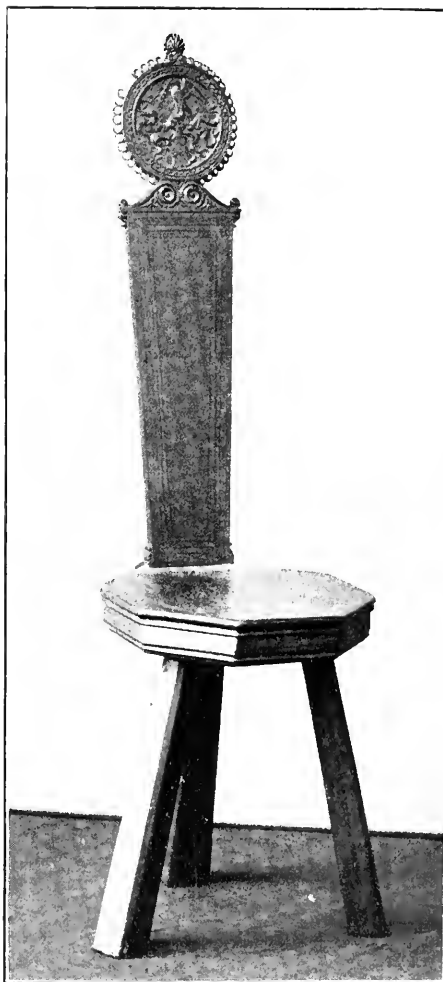


28.

Throne of "Guiliano dei Medici" about 1510. In a Private Collection.

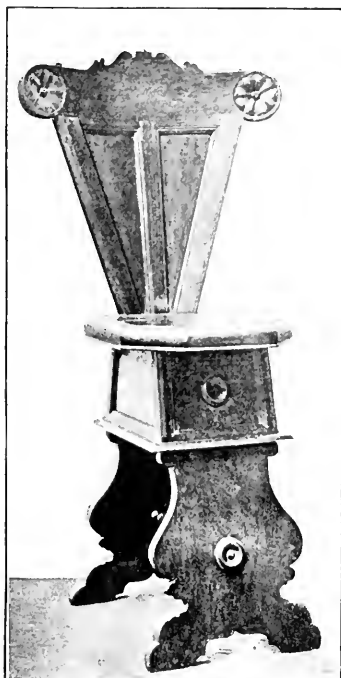


29.



30.

Strozzi Sgabello. Dr. A. Figdor Collection, Vienna.



31. Florentine Sgabello.
Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Berlin.



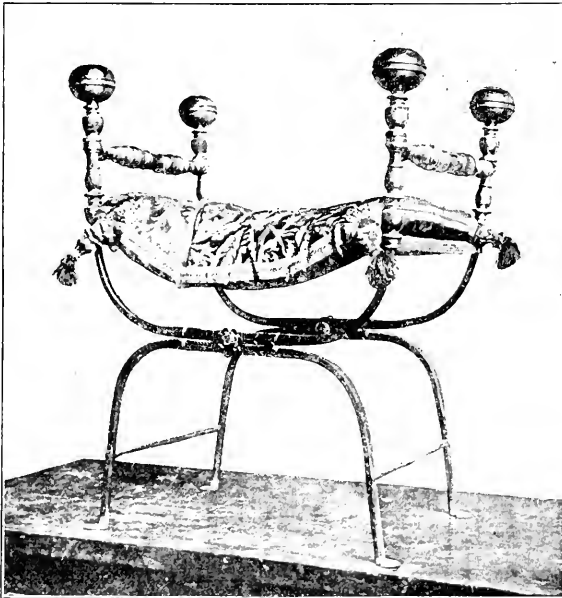
32. Florentine Sgabello.
Victoria and Albert Museum,
London.



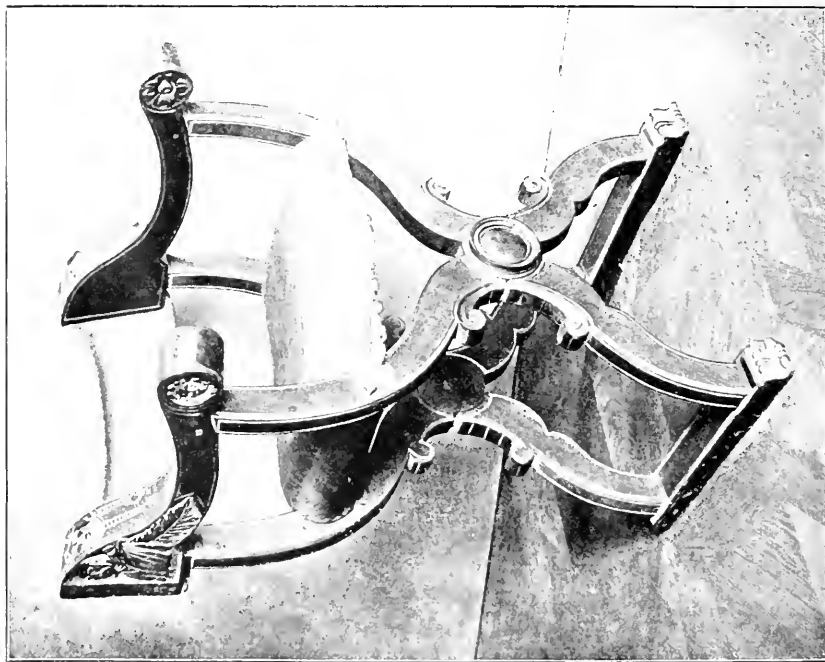
33. Florentine Sgabello.
Museum at Magdeburg.



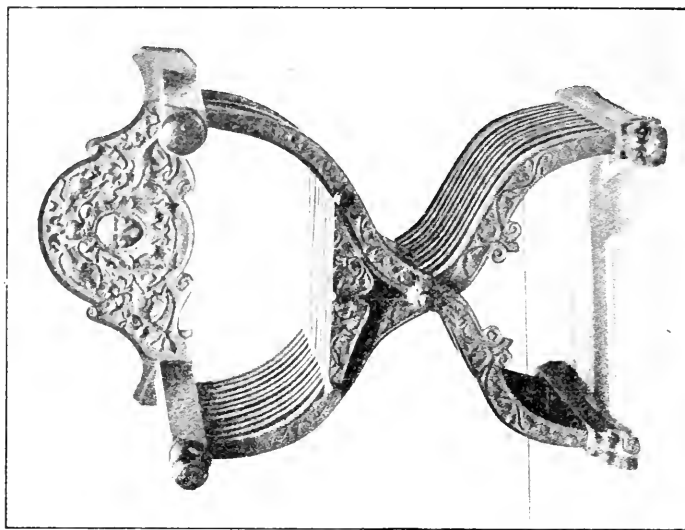
34 35. Tuscan Sgabello and Stool. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



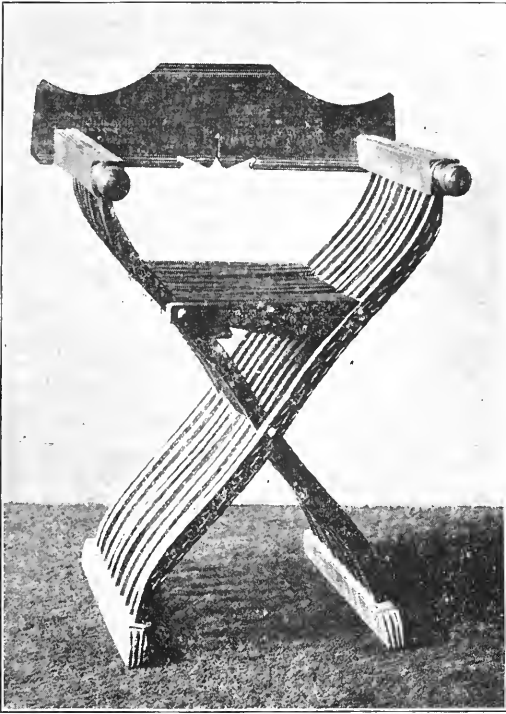
36. Florentine Fold-Stool of Wrought Iron and Brass. Bardini Collection, Florence.



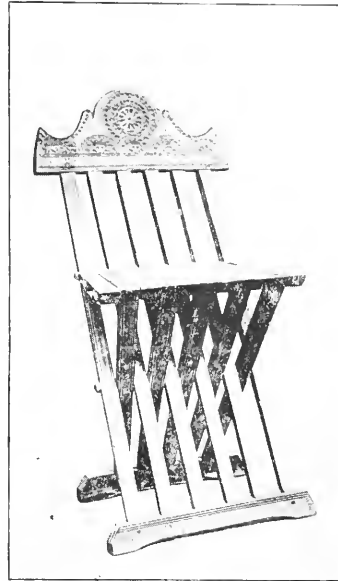
37. Danté-Chair with Leather Covered Seat.
Dr. A. Figdor Collection, Vienna.



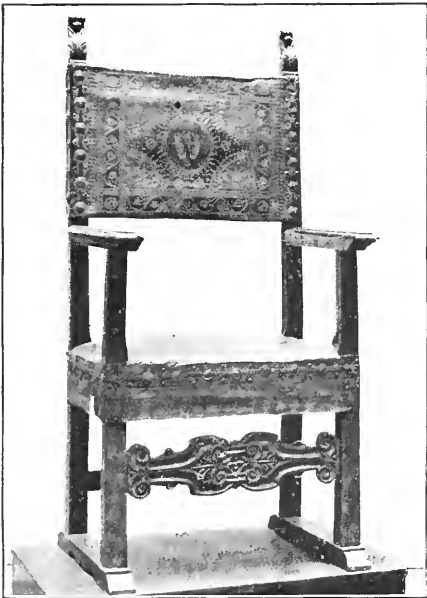
37a. Central Italian Folding Arm Chair.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



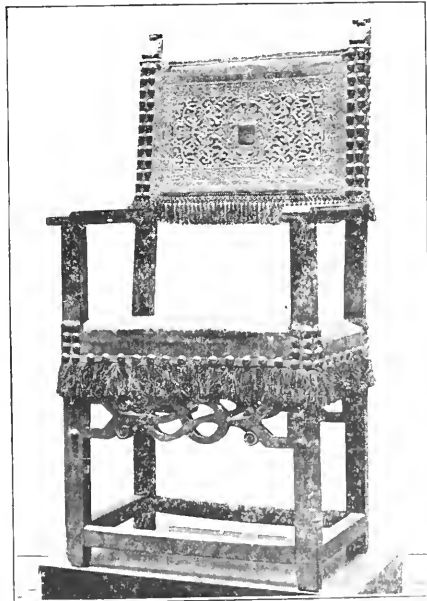
38.
Tuscan Folding Arm Chair.
Dr. A. Figdor Collection, Vienna.



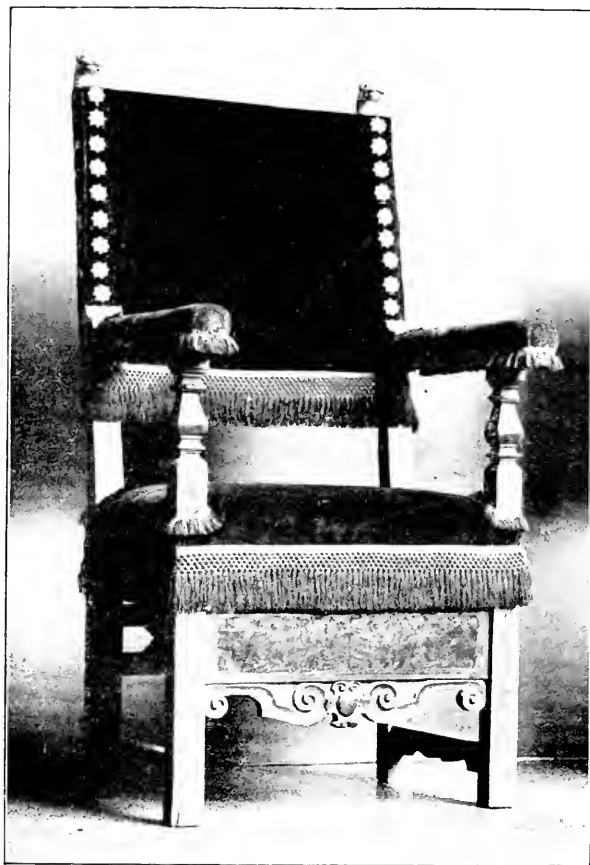
39.
Tuscan Folding Chair.
Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Berlin.



40.
Northern Italian Leather-Covered Arm Chairs. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



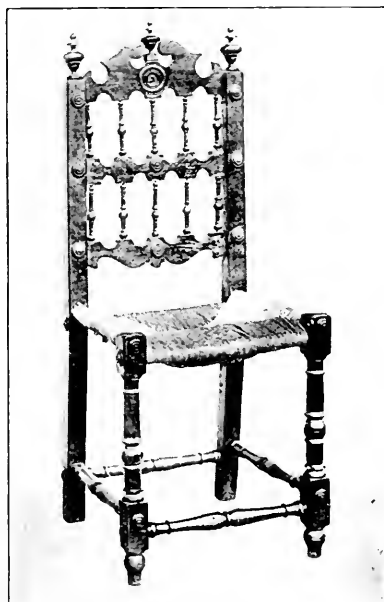
41.



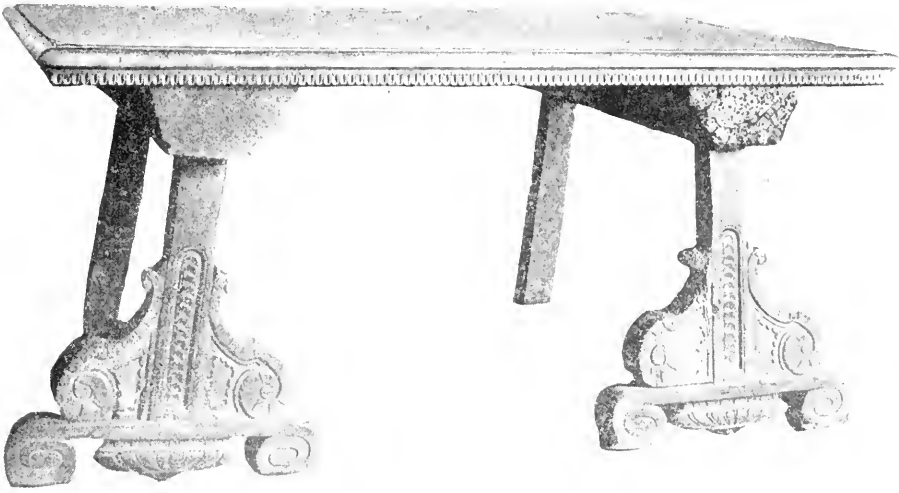
42. Florentine Arm Chair Velvet Covering.



43. Small Florentine Chair about 1550.

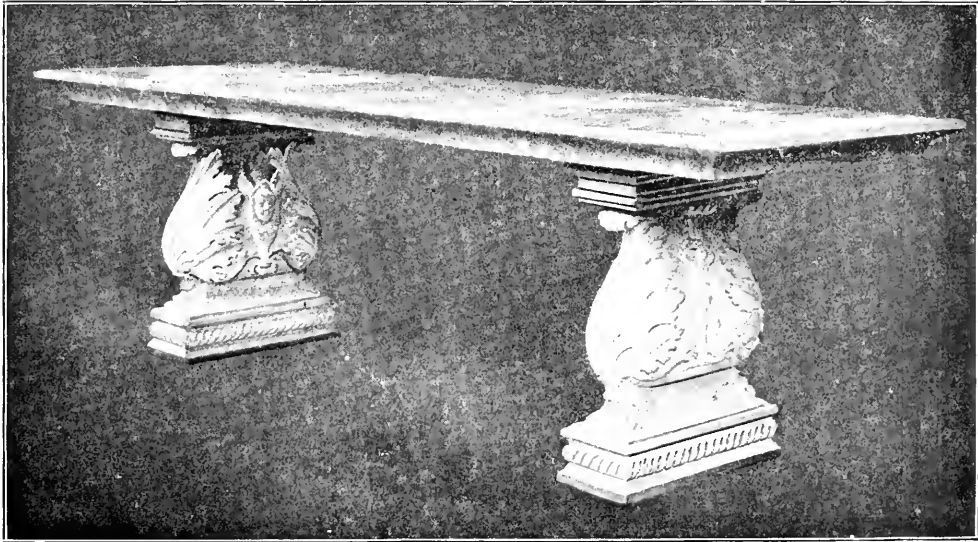


44. Florentine Chair with cane Seat.
Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Berlin.



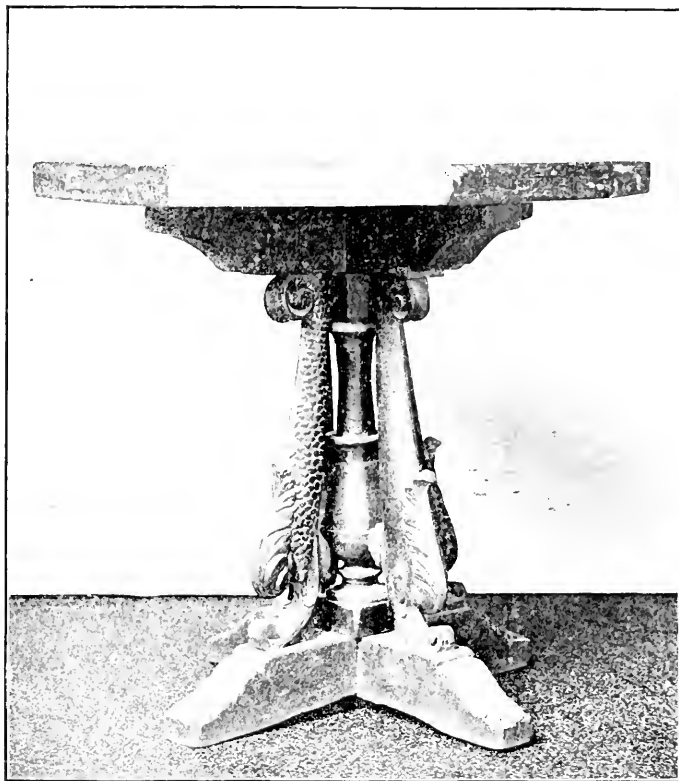
45.

Tuscan Table about 1530. In a Private Collection at Florence.



46.

Florentine Marble Table about 1475.



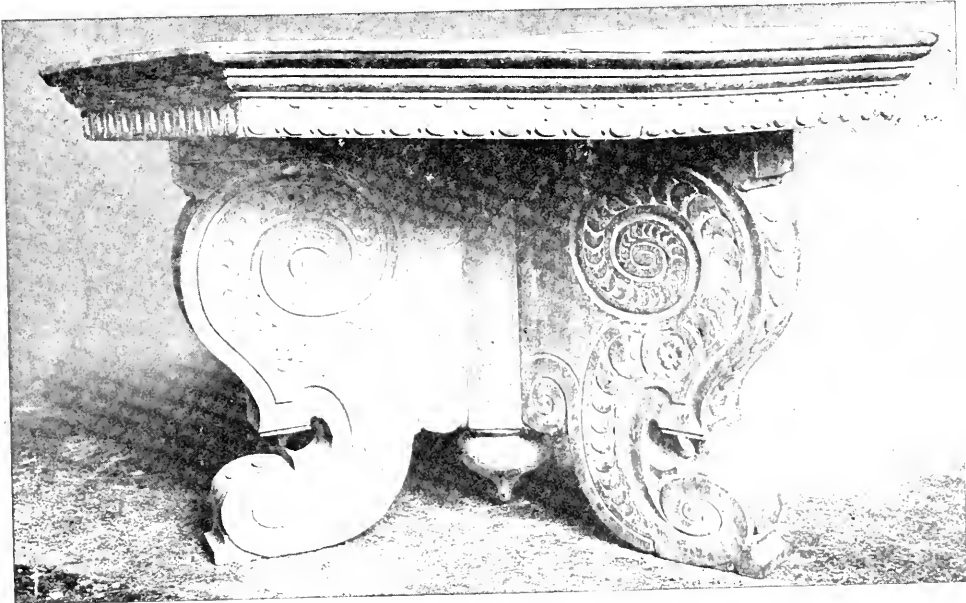
47. Small Tuscan Table end of the 15th Century.



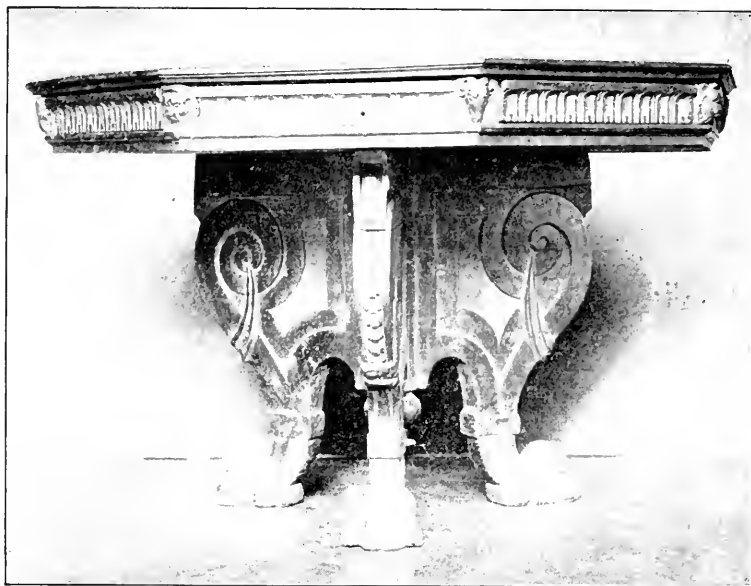
48. Florentine Table end of the 15th Century. Formerly at Florence.



49. Tuscan Table end of the 15th Century. Dr. A. Figdor Collection, Vienna.

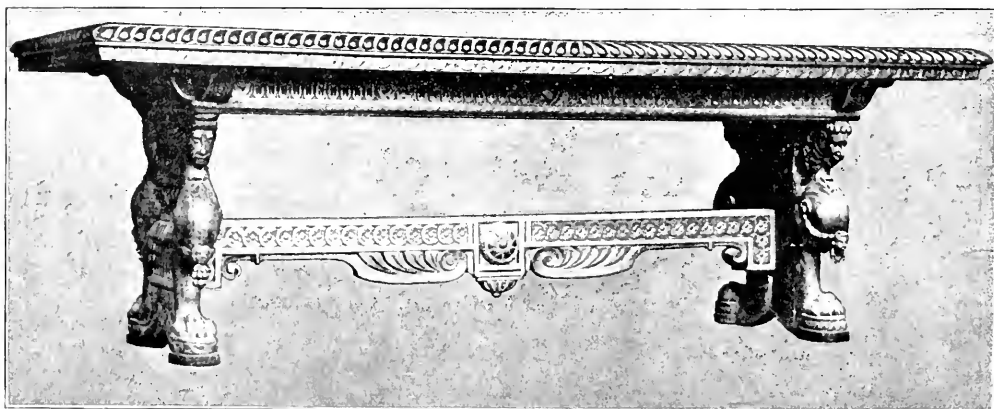


50. Tuscan Table about 1550. In a Private Collection.



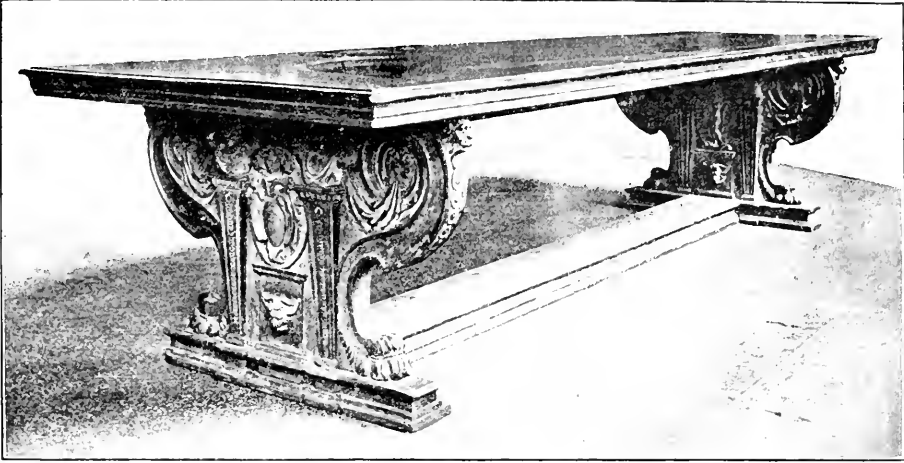
51.

Florentine Table about 1550. Formerly at Florence.

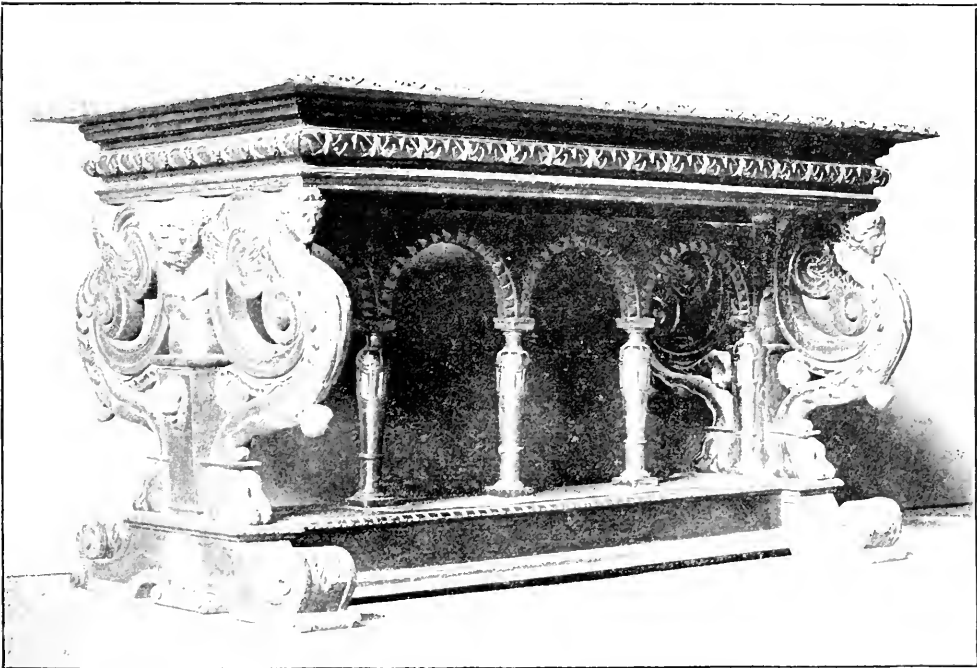


52.

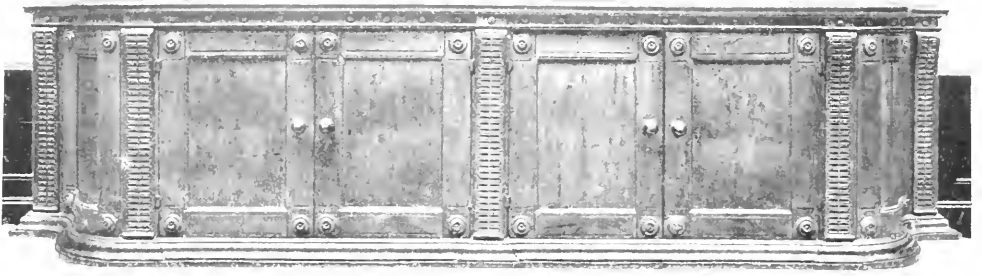
Florentine Table about 1550. Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Berlin.



53.
Florentine Table about 1550. In a Private American Collection.

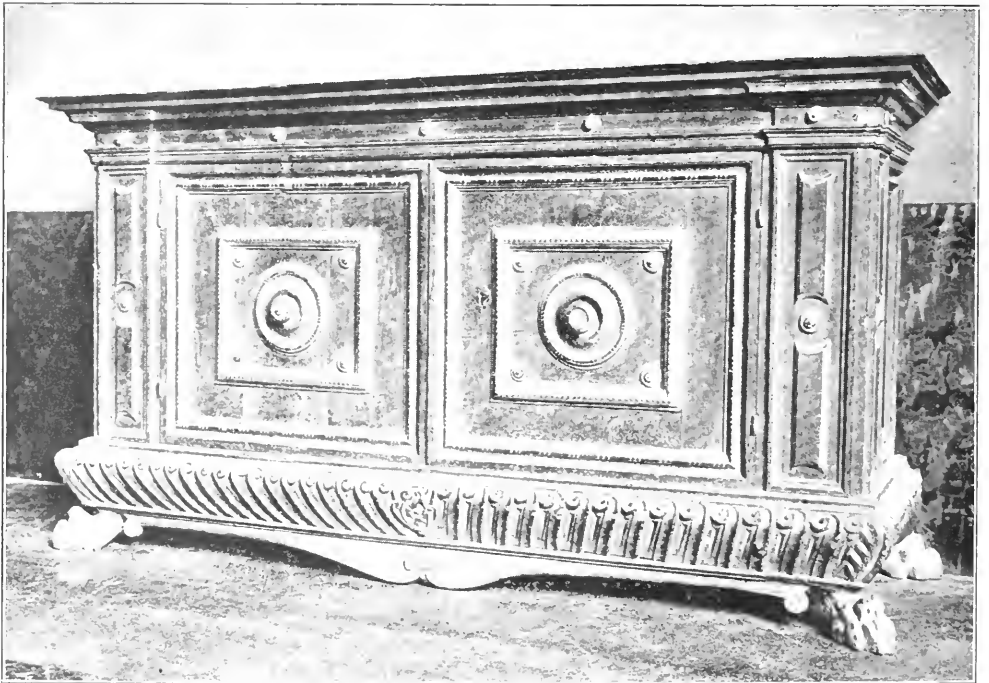


54.
Florentine Table about 1540. Torregiani Palace.



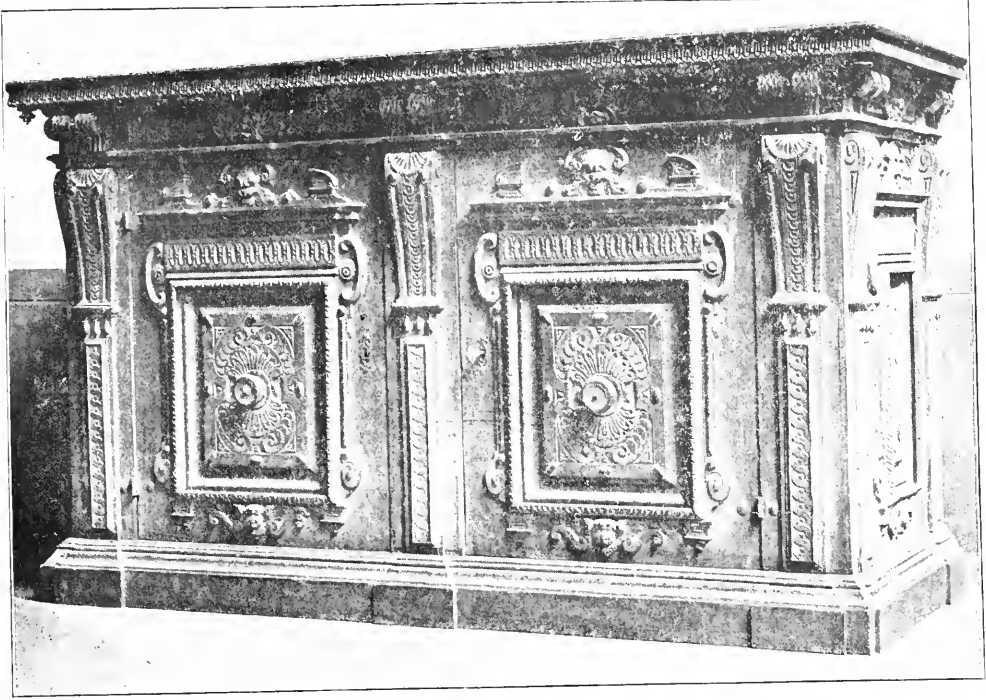
55.

Tuscan Credenza about 1560. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.

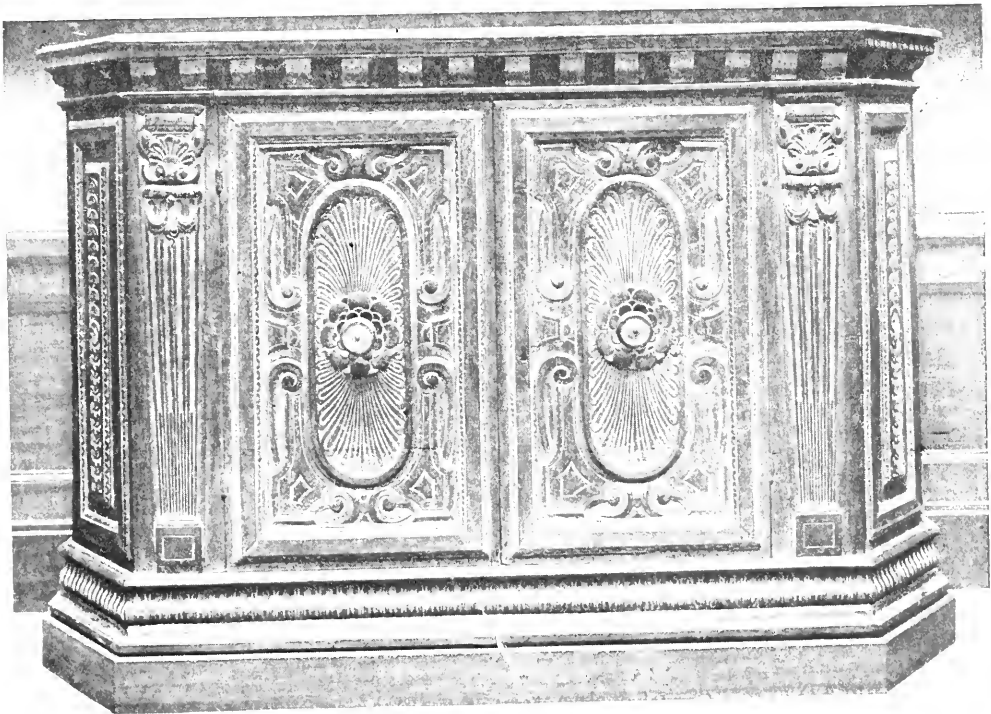


56.

Florentine Credenza about 1560.



57. Florentine Credenza about 1550. Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Berlin.

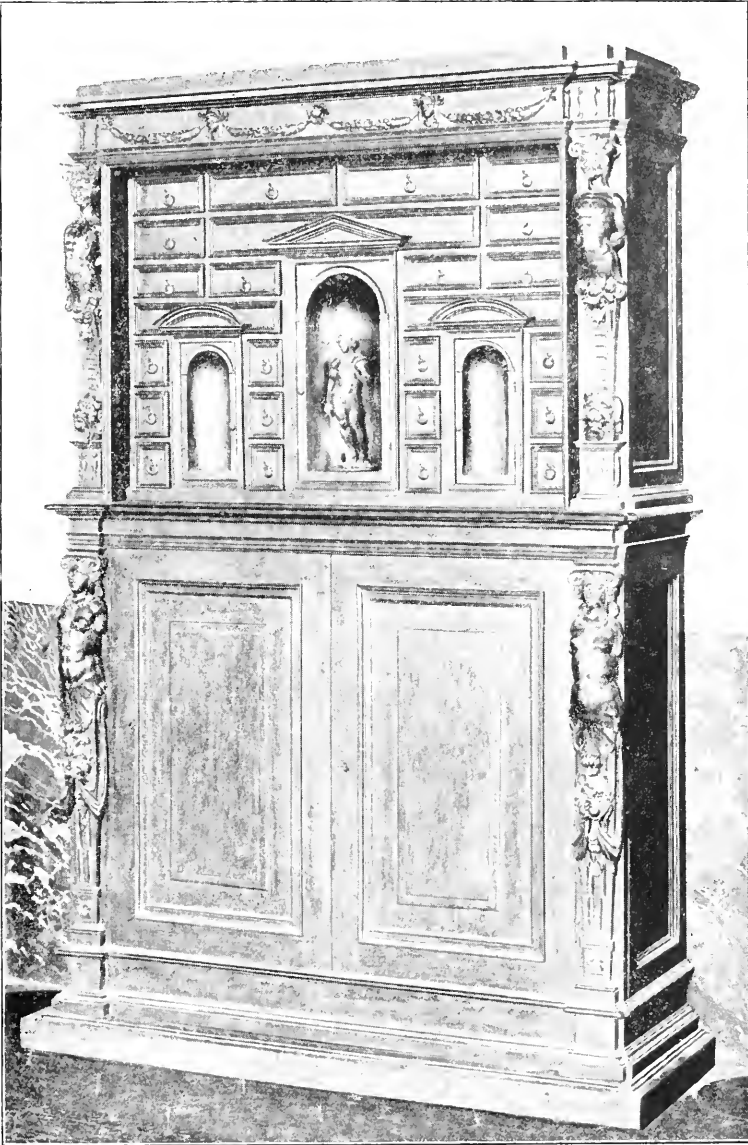


58. Florentine Credenza about 1550. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



59.

Tuscan Credenza about 1550. Dr. Töpfer Collection, Stettin.



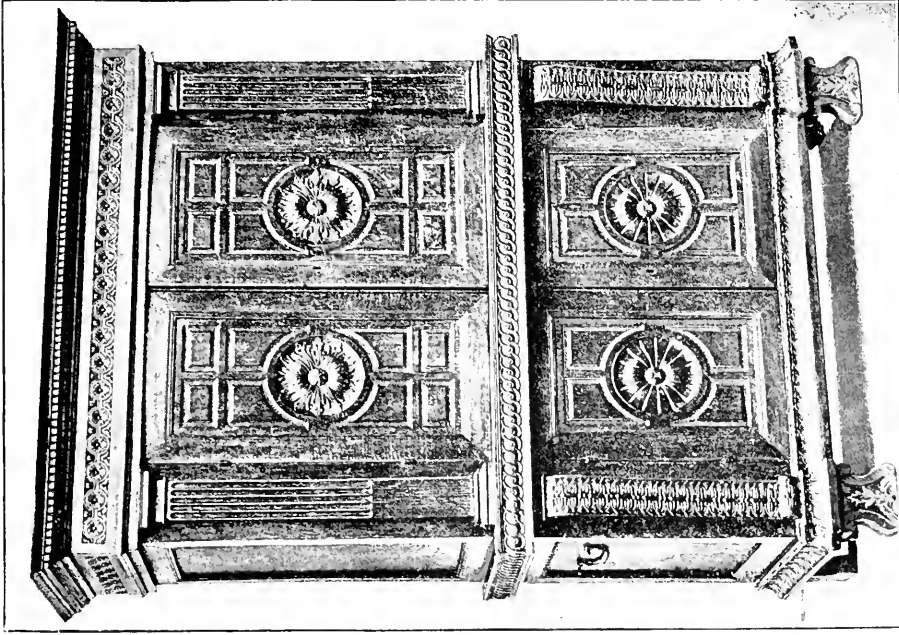
60.

Florentine Writing Cabinet about 1550. Otto Beit Collection, London.

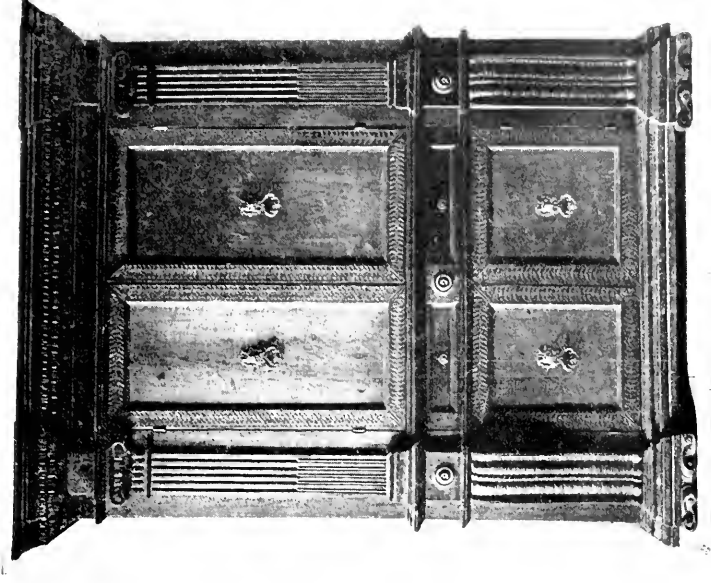


ol.

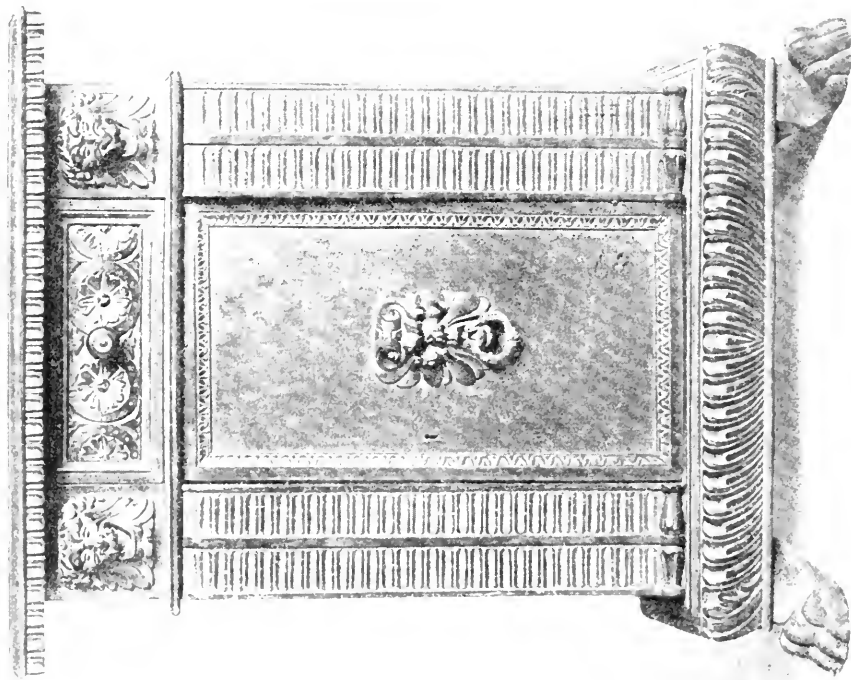
Florentine Writing Cabinet, end of the 16th Century. In a Private Collection.



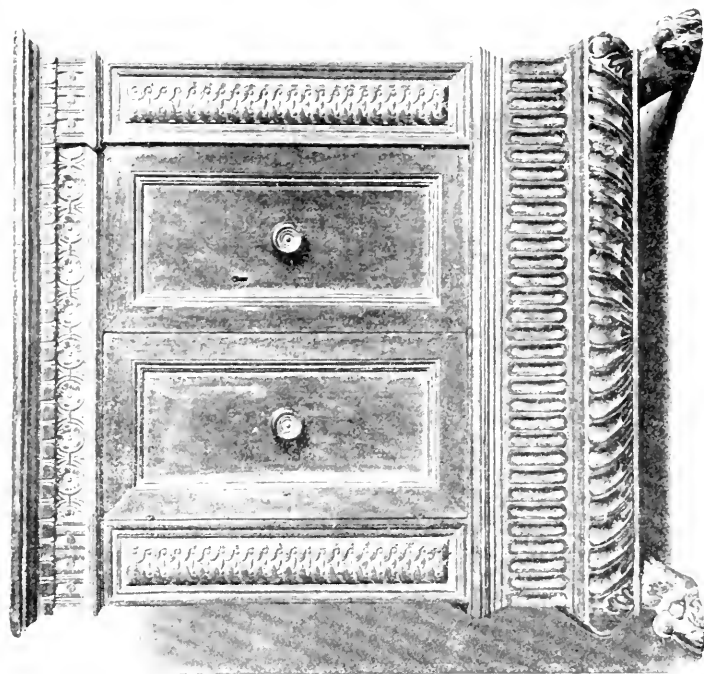
62. Northern Italian Cabinet about 1550.
Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Berlin



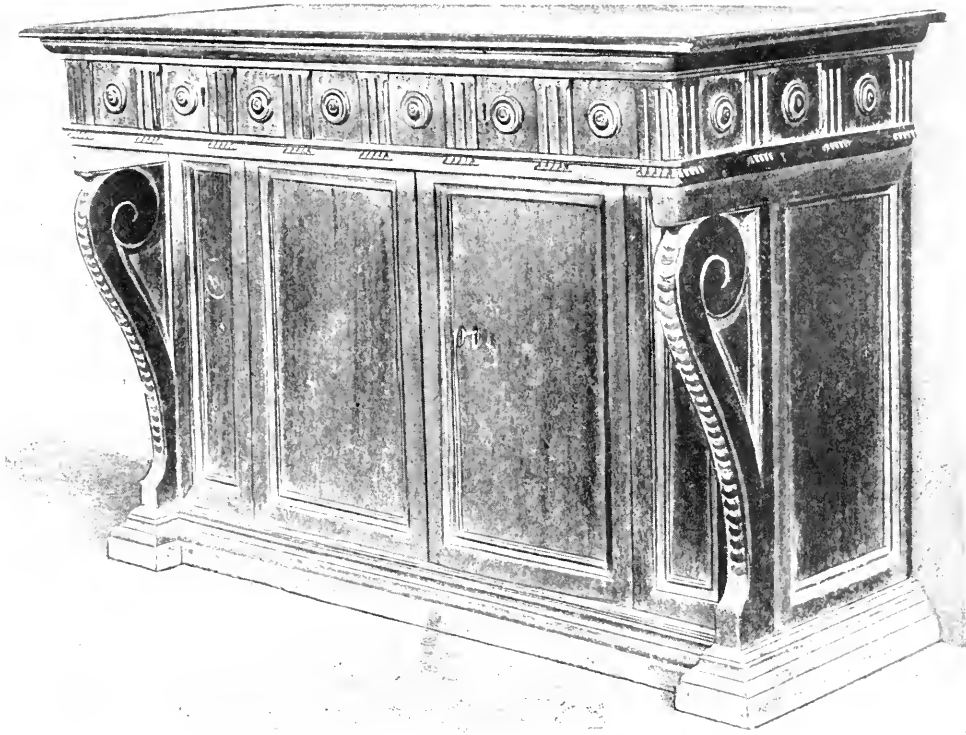
63. Northern Italian Cabinet about 1580.



64. Small Tuscan Credenza about 1560.
Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.

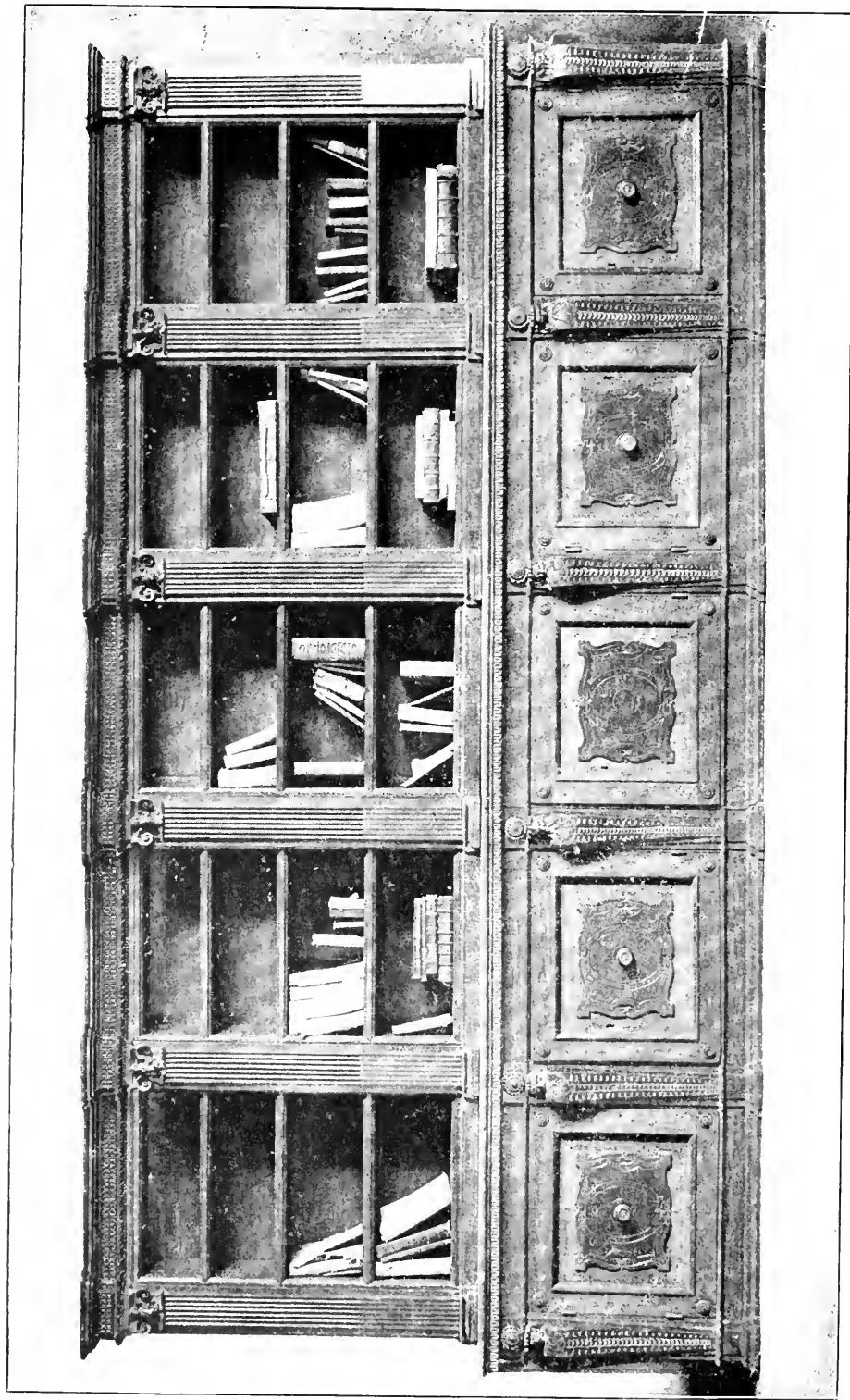


65. Small Tuscan Credenza about 1560.
Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



66.

Tuscan Desk Cabinet about 1580. Davanzati Palace, Florence.



67. Northern Italian Book Case about 1560. Prince Liechtenstein Collection, Eisgrub.



68.

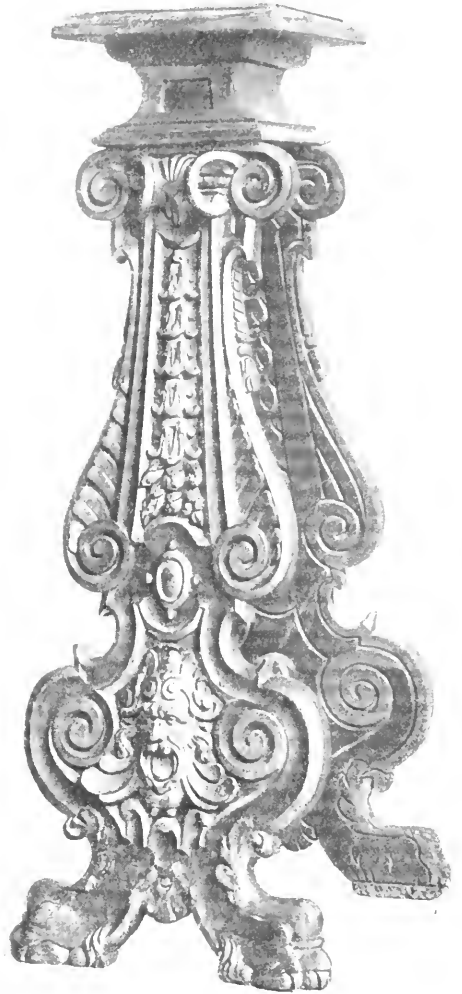
69.

Florentine Pedestals. In a Private Collection at Berlin.



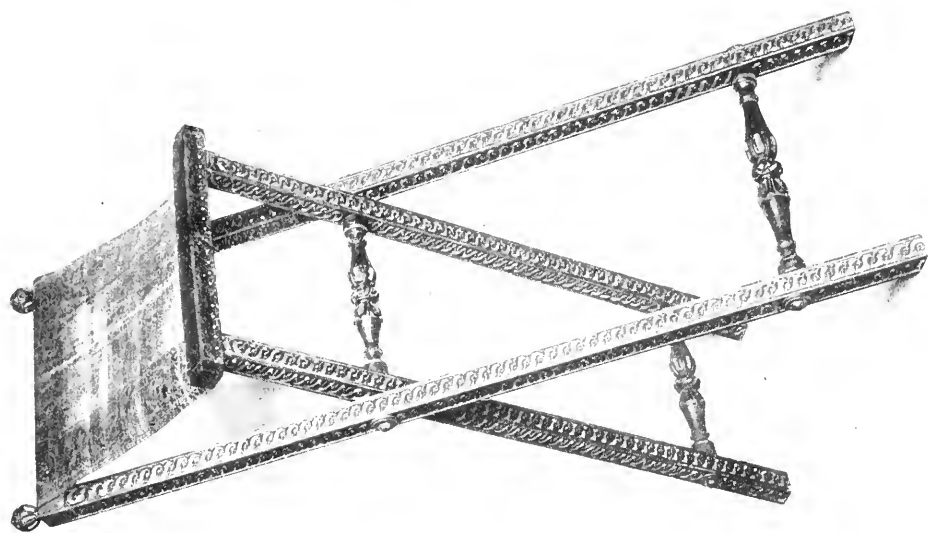
70.

Roman Pedestal about 1530.
Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.

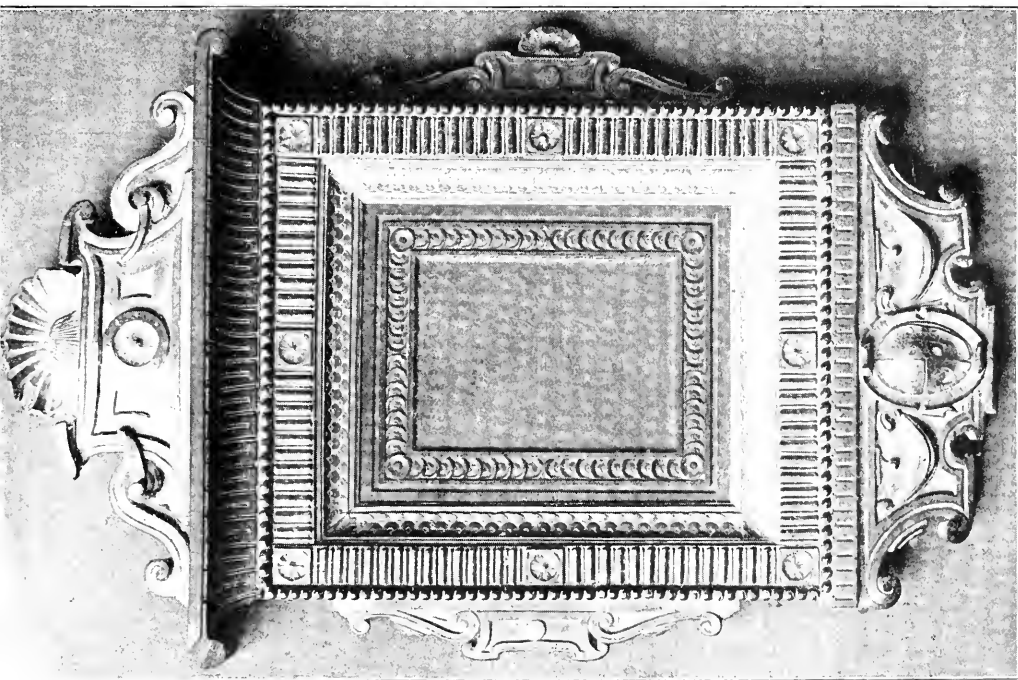


71.

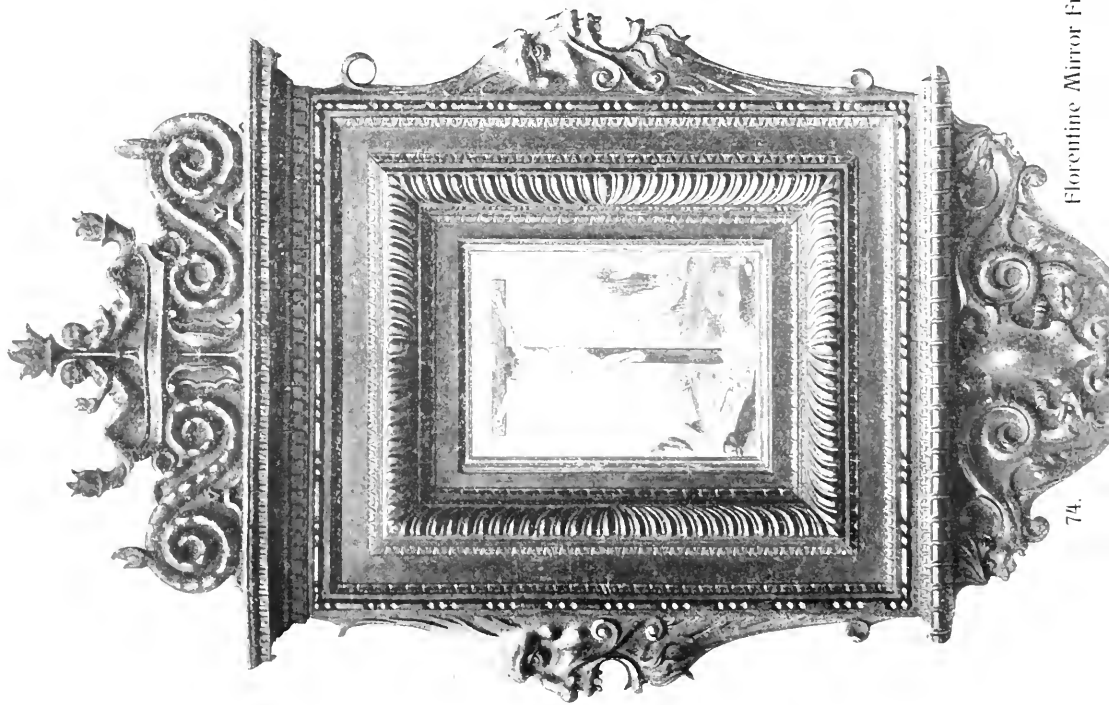
Tuscan Pedestal about 1570.
Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



72. Tuscan Reading Stand about 1560.
Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.

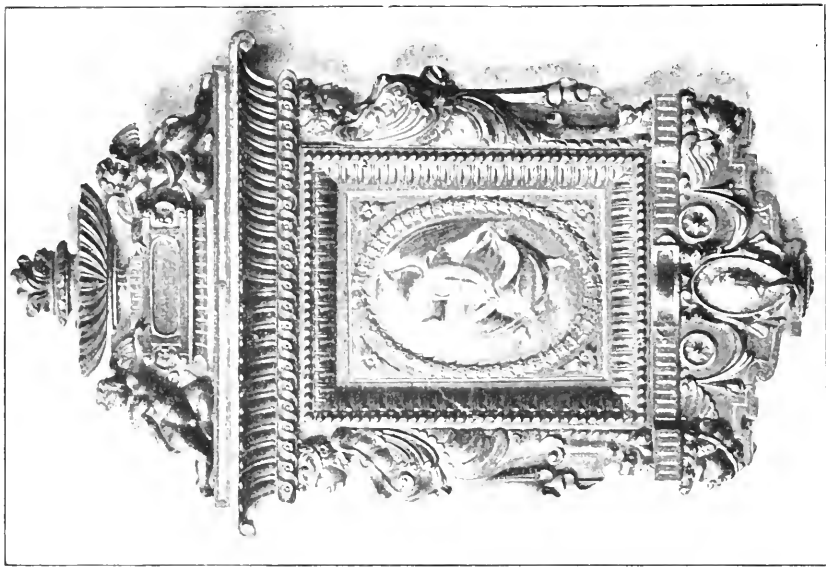


73. Florentine Mirror Frame about 1550.



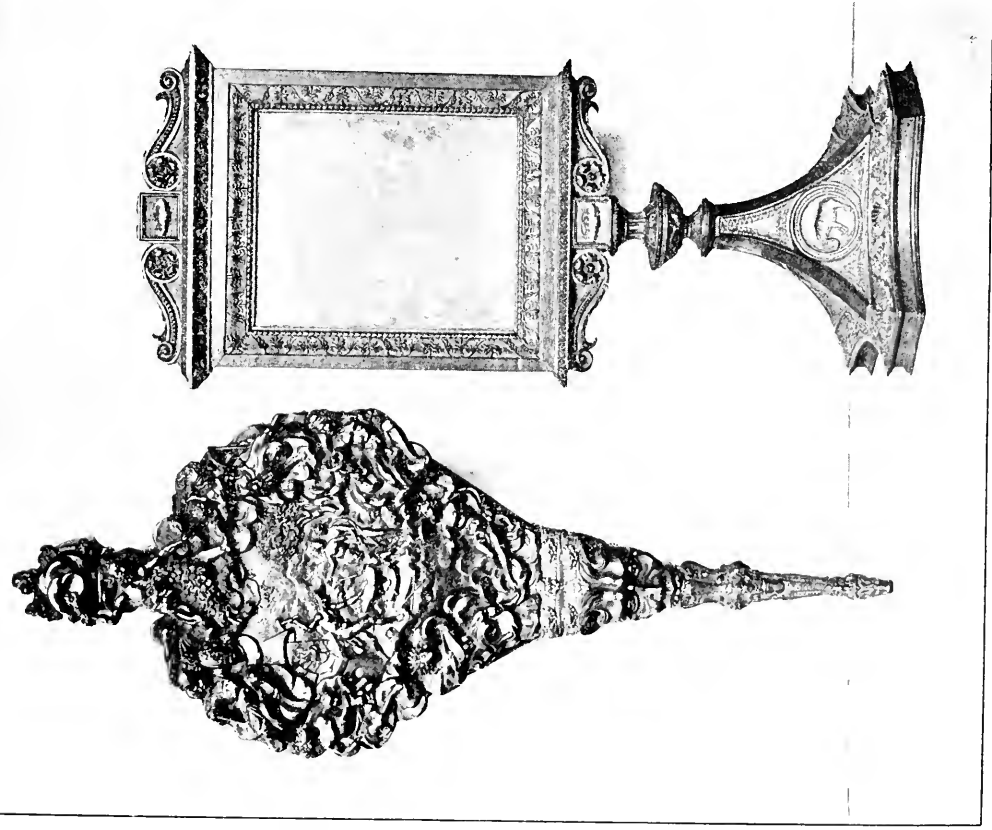
74.

Florentine Mirror Frame about 1520. In a Private Collection.

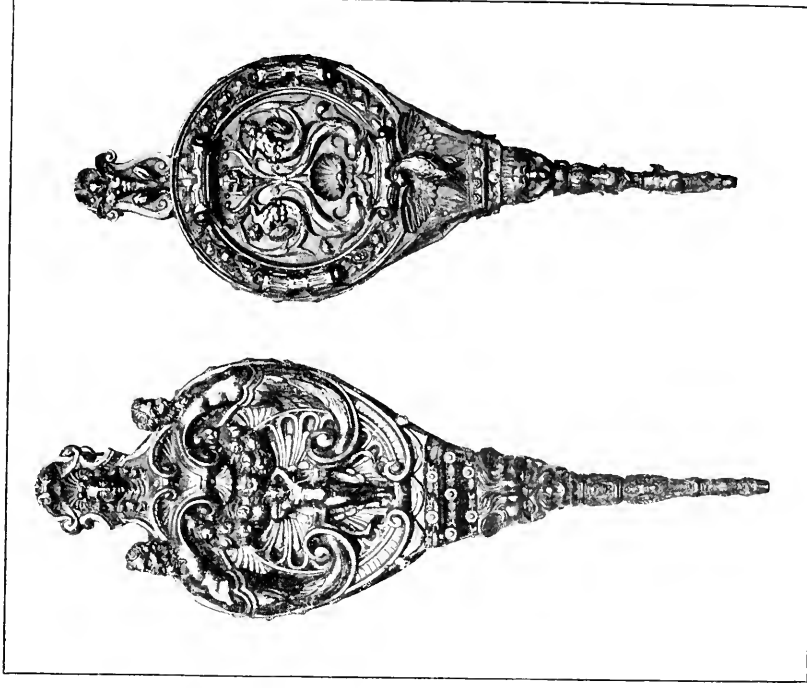


75.

Florentine Mirror Frame about 1540. Friedrichshof.

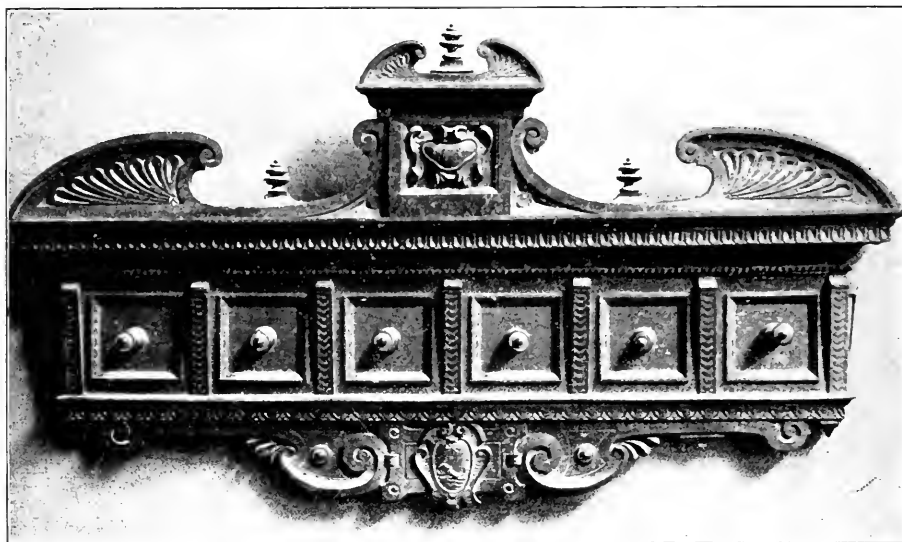


79.
Bellows and Standing Mirror. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



77.
Florentine Bellows. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

78.



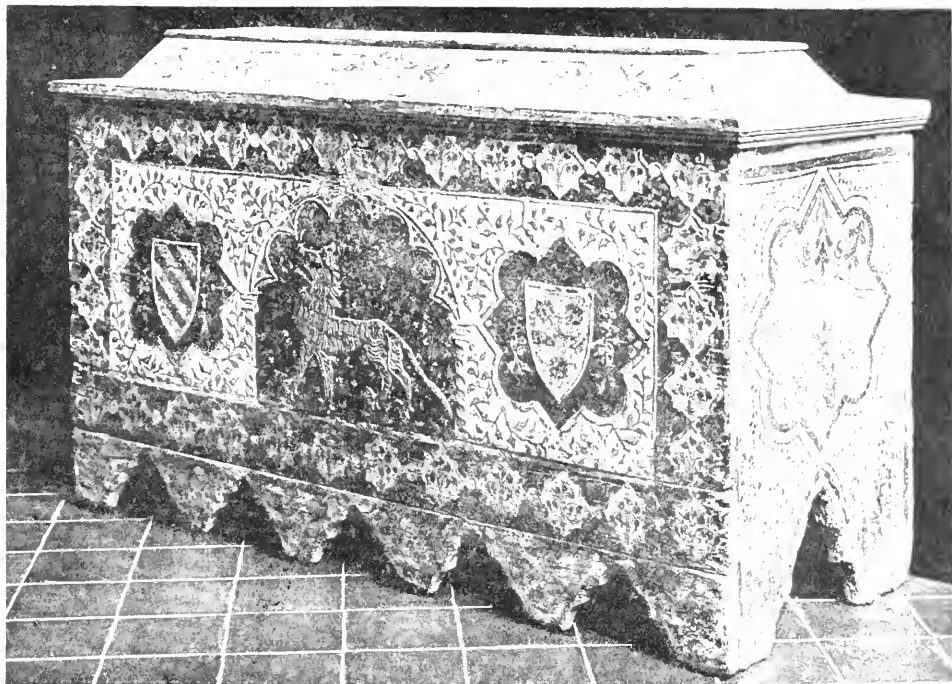
80.

Florentine Clothes Rack about 1560.



81.

Florentine Carved Panel about 1560. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



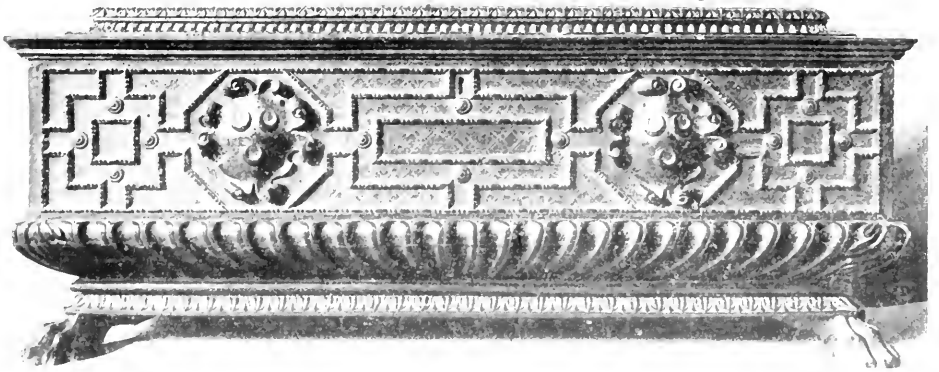
82.

Sieneſe Cassone about 1450. In a Private Collection at Florence.

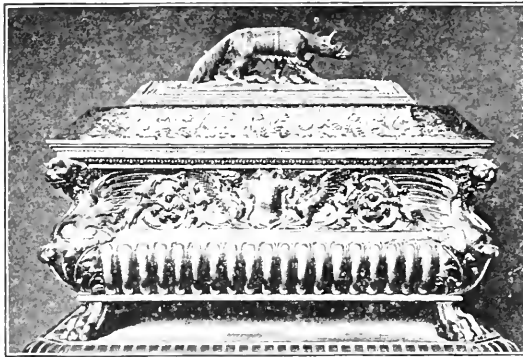


83.

Sieneſe Jewel Casket of the 15th Century.
Otto Lanz Collection, Amsterdam.



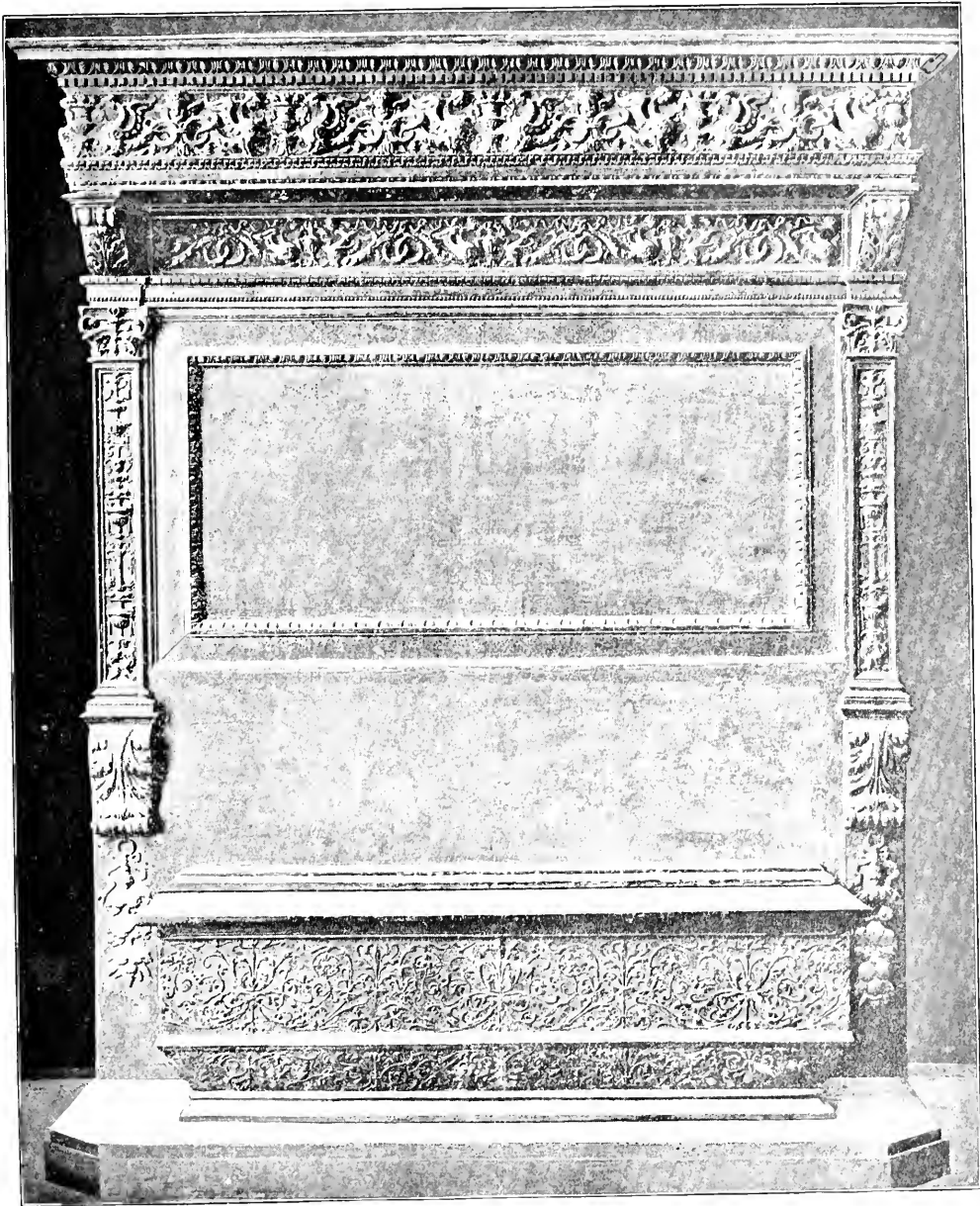
84. Siennese Cassone about 1570. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



85. Casket by A. Barile. City Hall, Siena.



87. Siennese Table about 1540. In a Private Collection at Vienna.

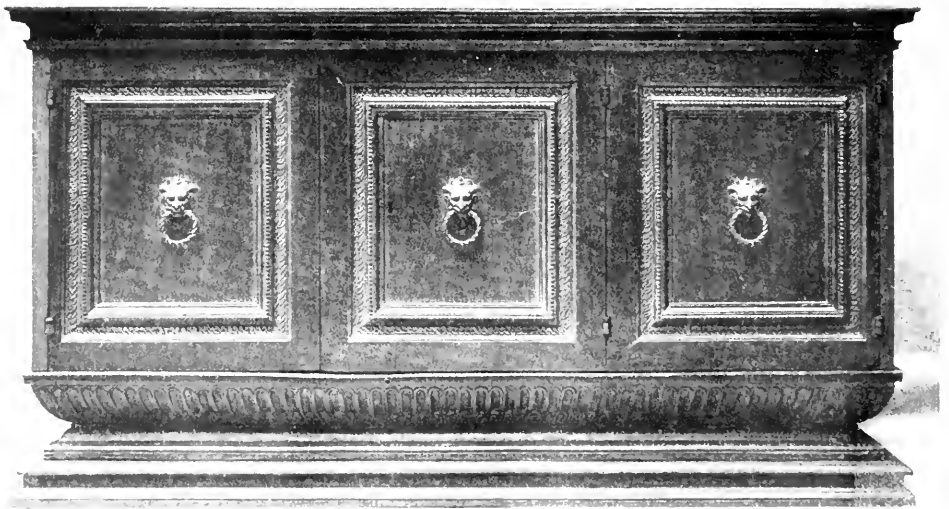


86. Synagogue Throne about 1525. (The Seat is a Cassone of a Later Period).
Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Berlin.



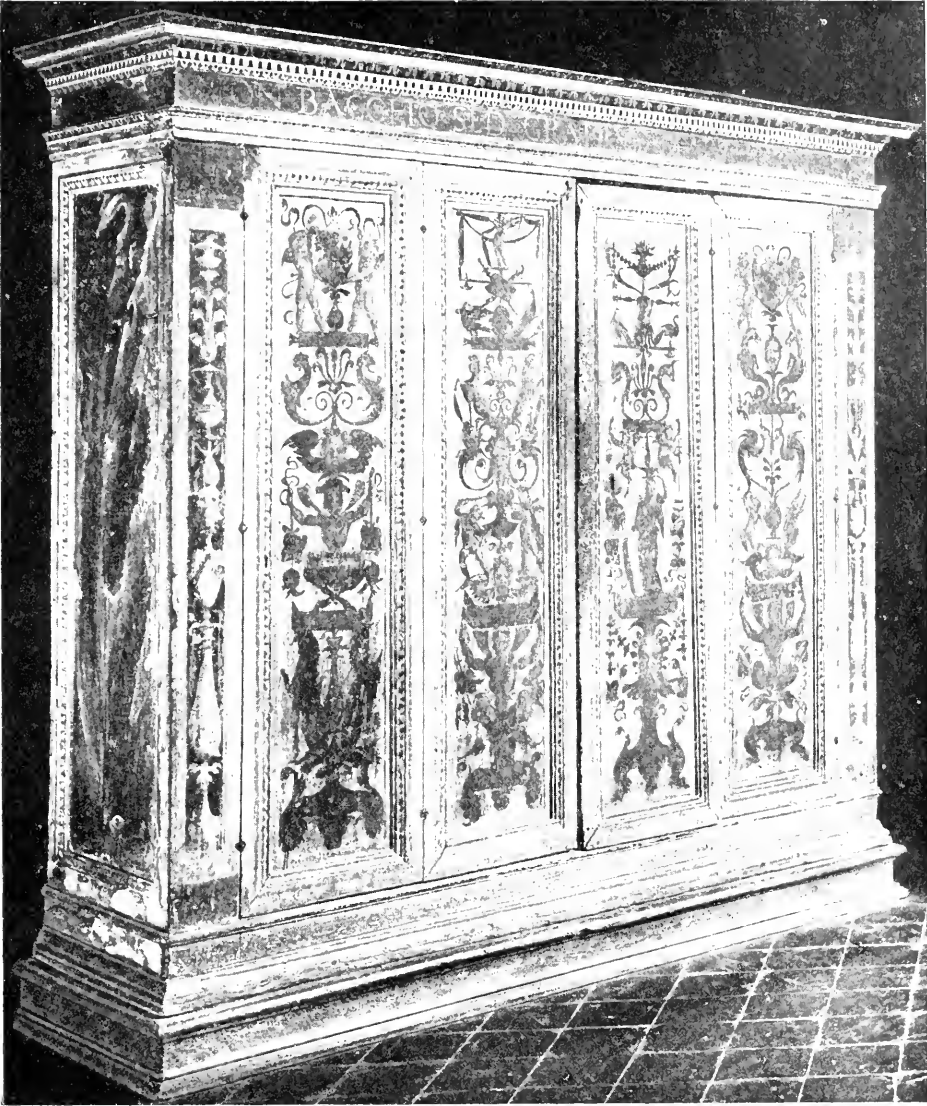
88.

Sienese Table about 1560. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



89.

Sienese Credenza about 1540. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.

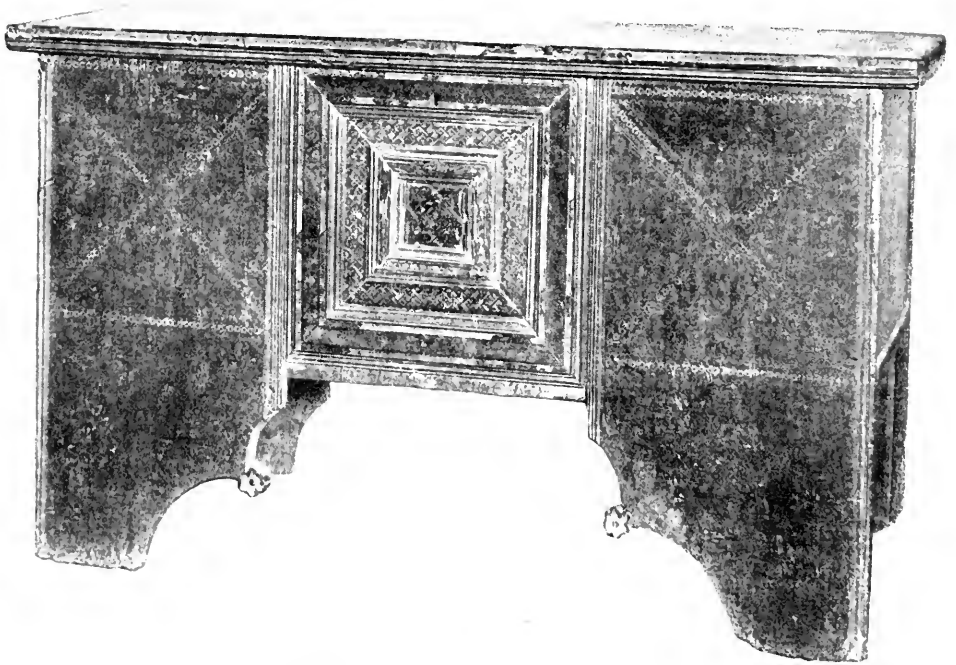


90.

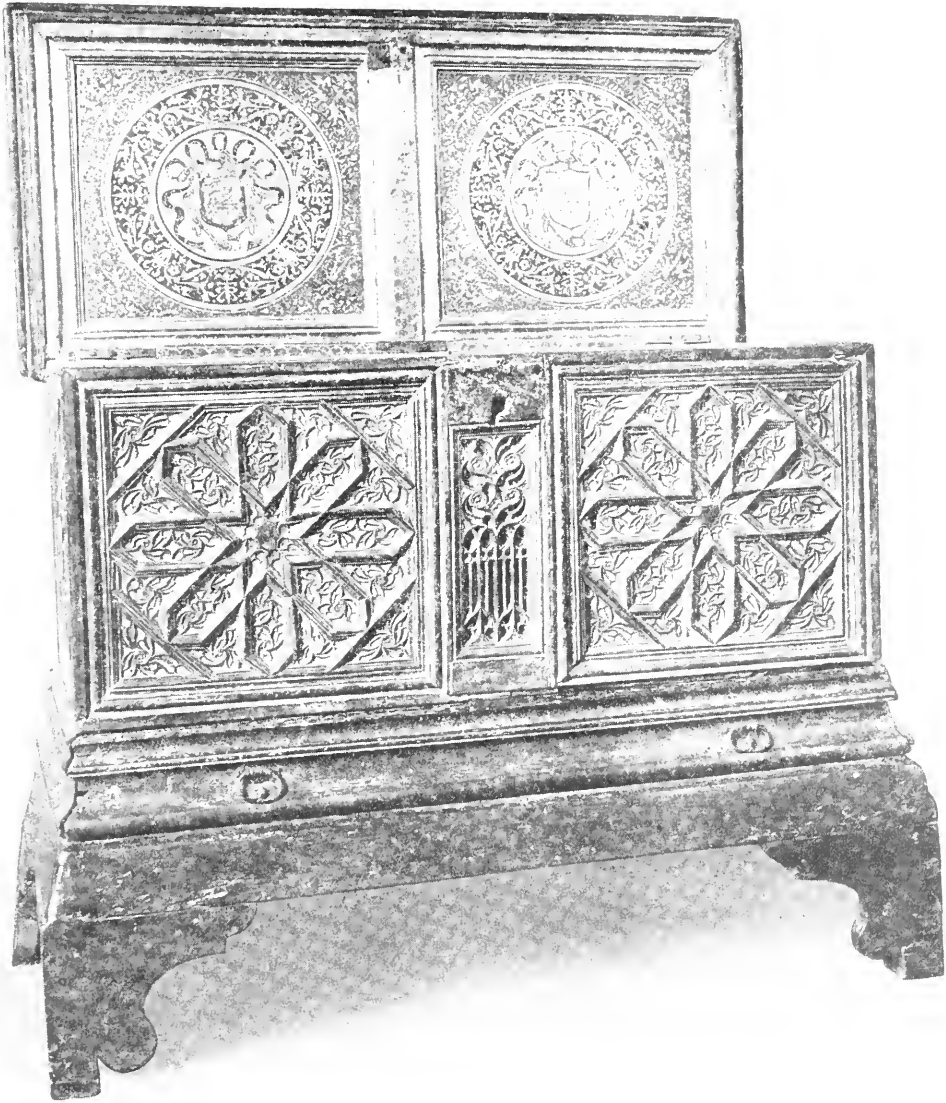
Sieneſe Cabinet about 1540. Davanzati Palace, Florence.



91. Umbrian Chest with Drawers about 1480.

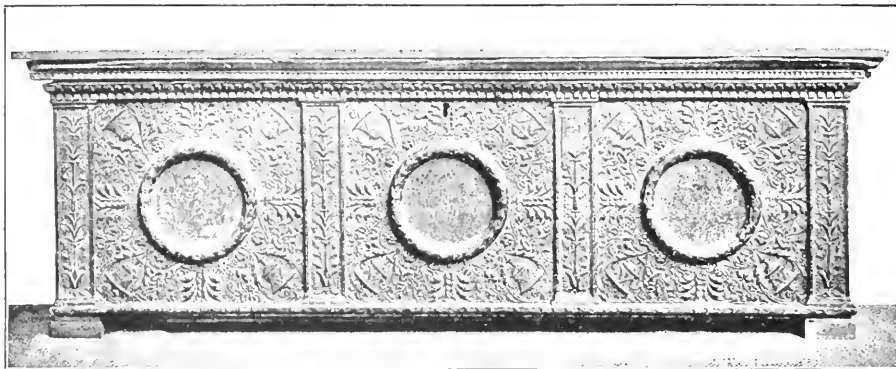


92. Umbrian Table about 1450. In a Private Collection at Florence.

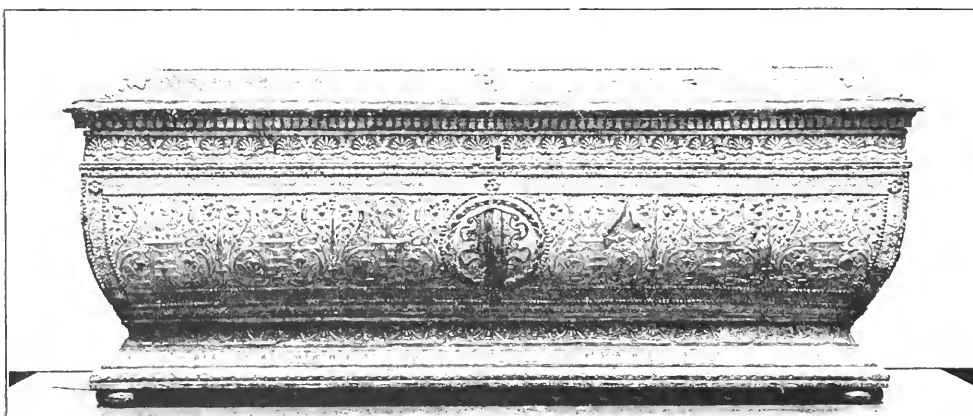


93.

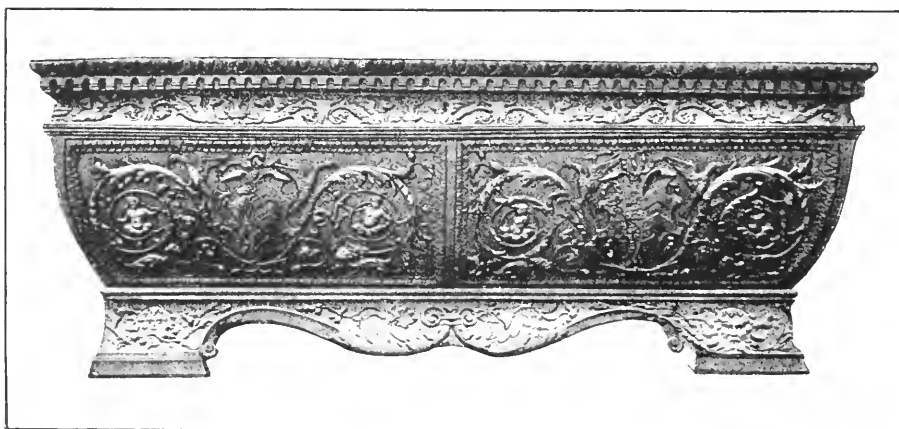
Large Venetian Jewel Chest about 1500. Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Berlin.



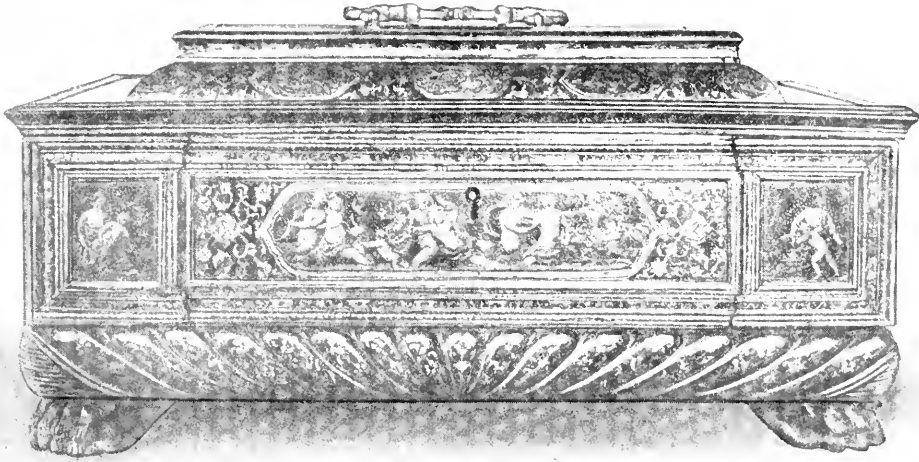
94. Venetian Cassone with Gesso Work. Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Berlin.



95. Venetian Cassone with Gesso Work. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

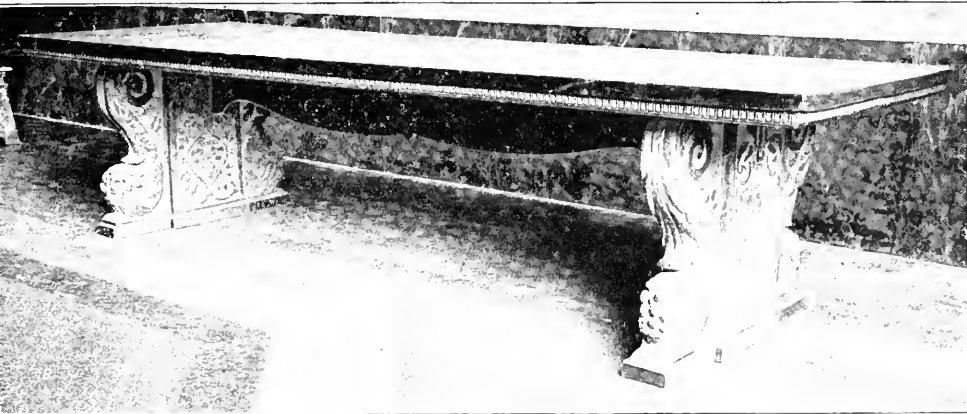


96. Venetian Cassone. In a Private Collection.



97.

Small Venetian Jewel Casket about 1540. Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Berlin.



98.

Venetian Table about 1520. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



99.

Venetian Table about 1550. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.

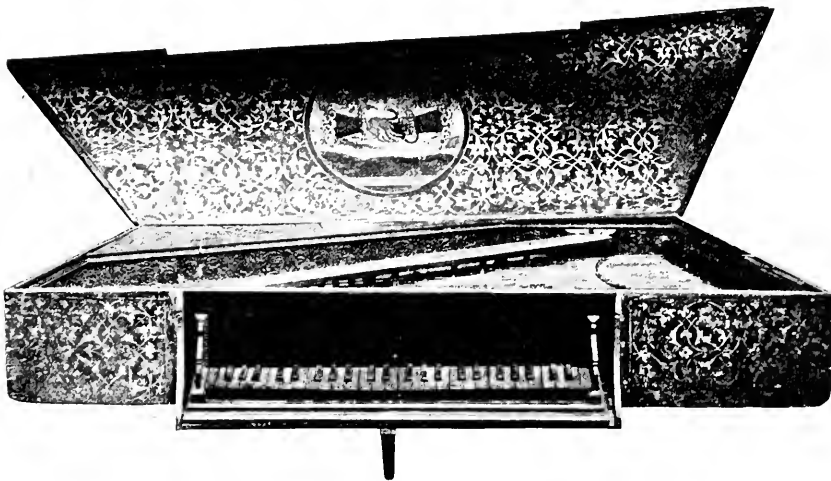


100.

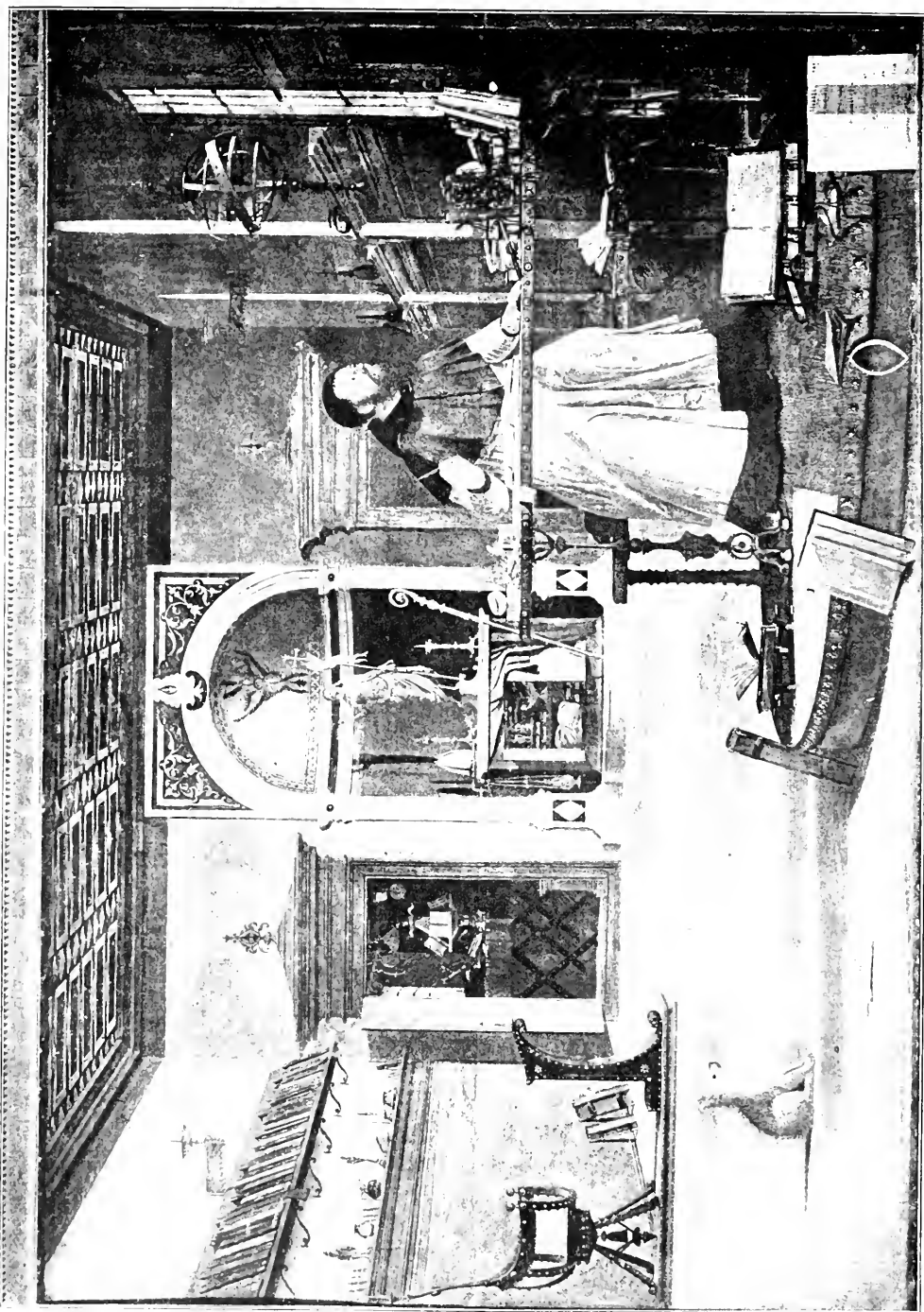
Large Venetian Table about 1570. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



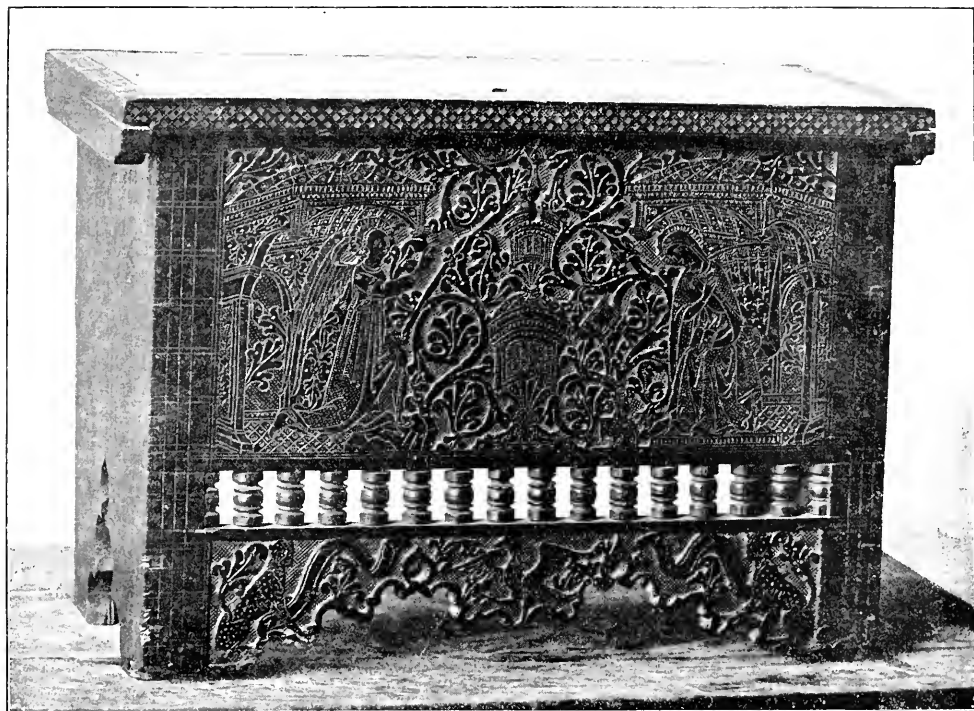
101. Venetian Savonarola Chair with Leather Seat.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



101 a. Venetian Clavier about 1550.

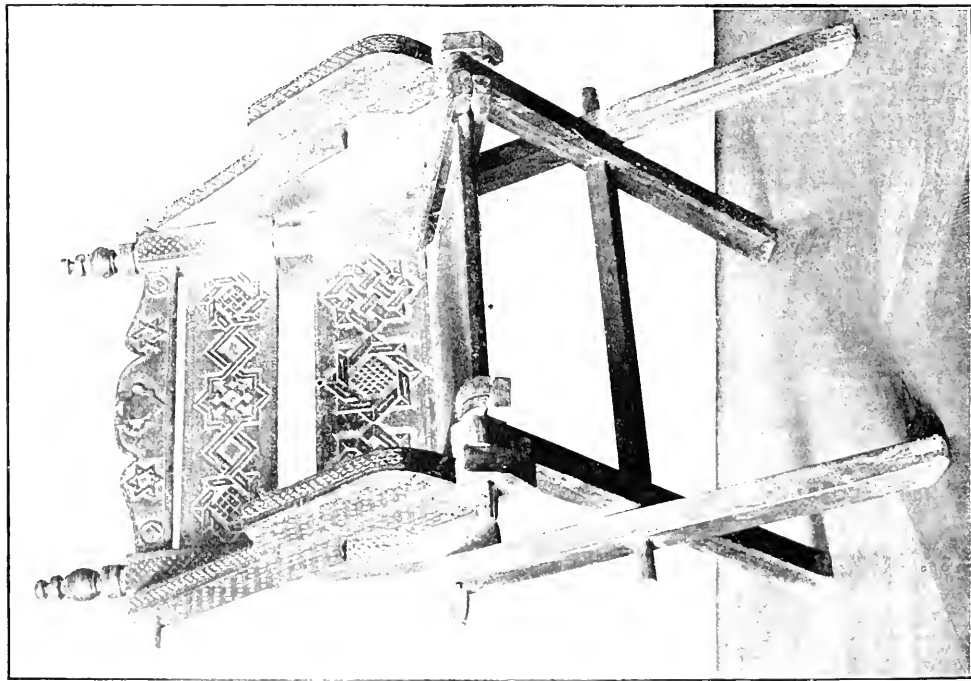


102. Venetian Study Room End of the 15th Century. From a Painting by V. Carpaccio at Venice.

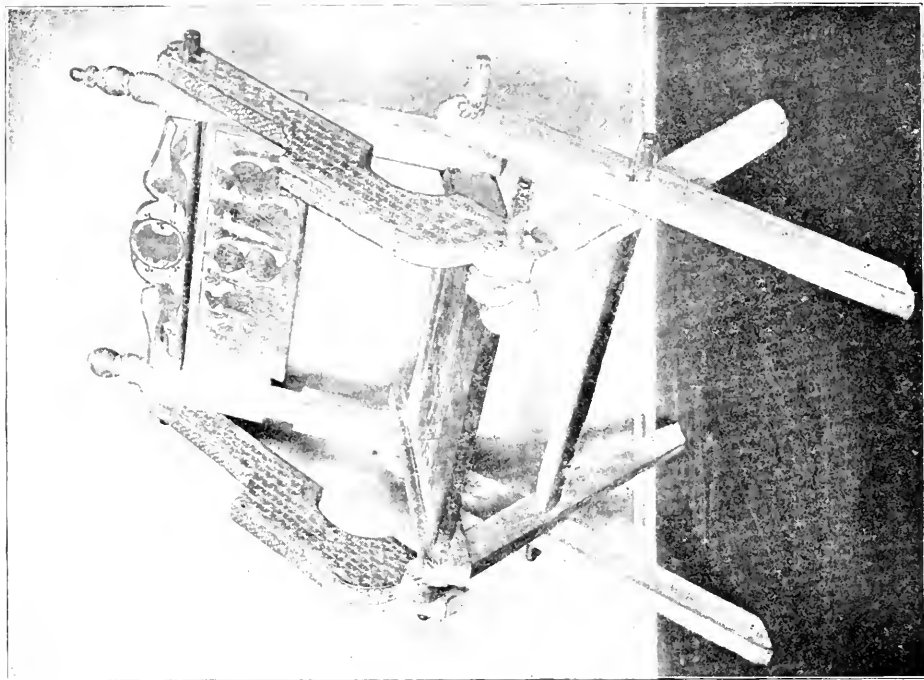


103.

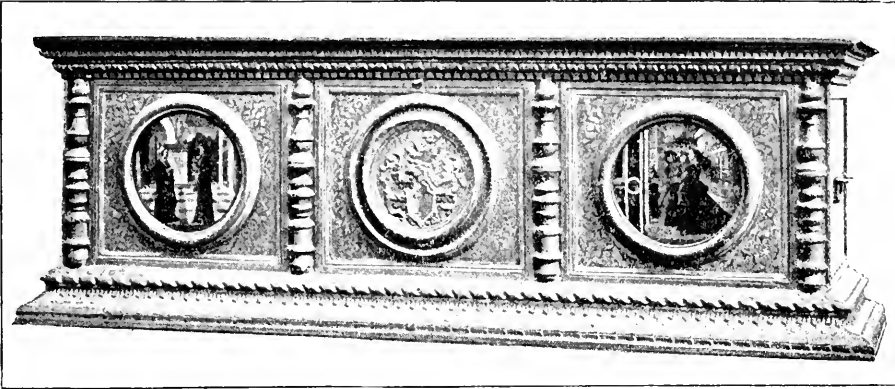
Cassone, Dr. A. Figdor Collection, Vienna.



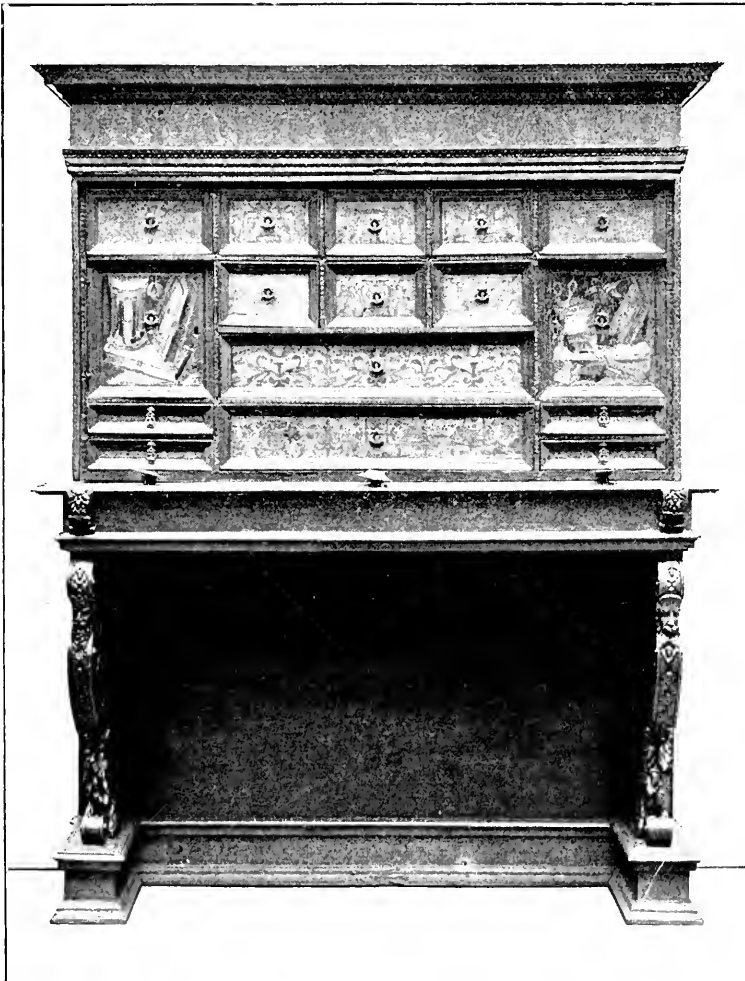
105. Folding-Chair. Dr. A. Figdor Collection, Vienna.



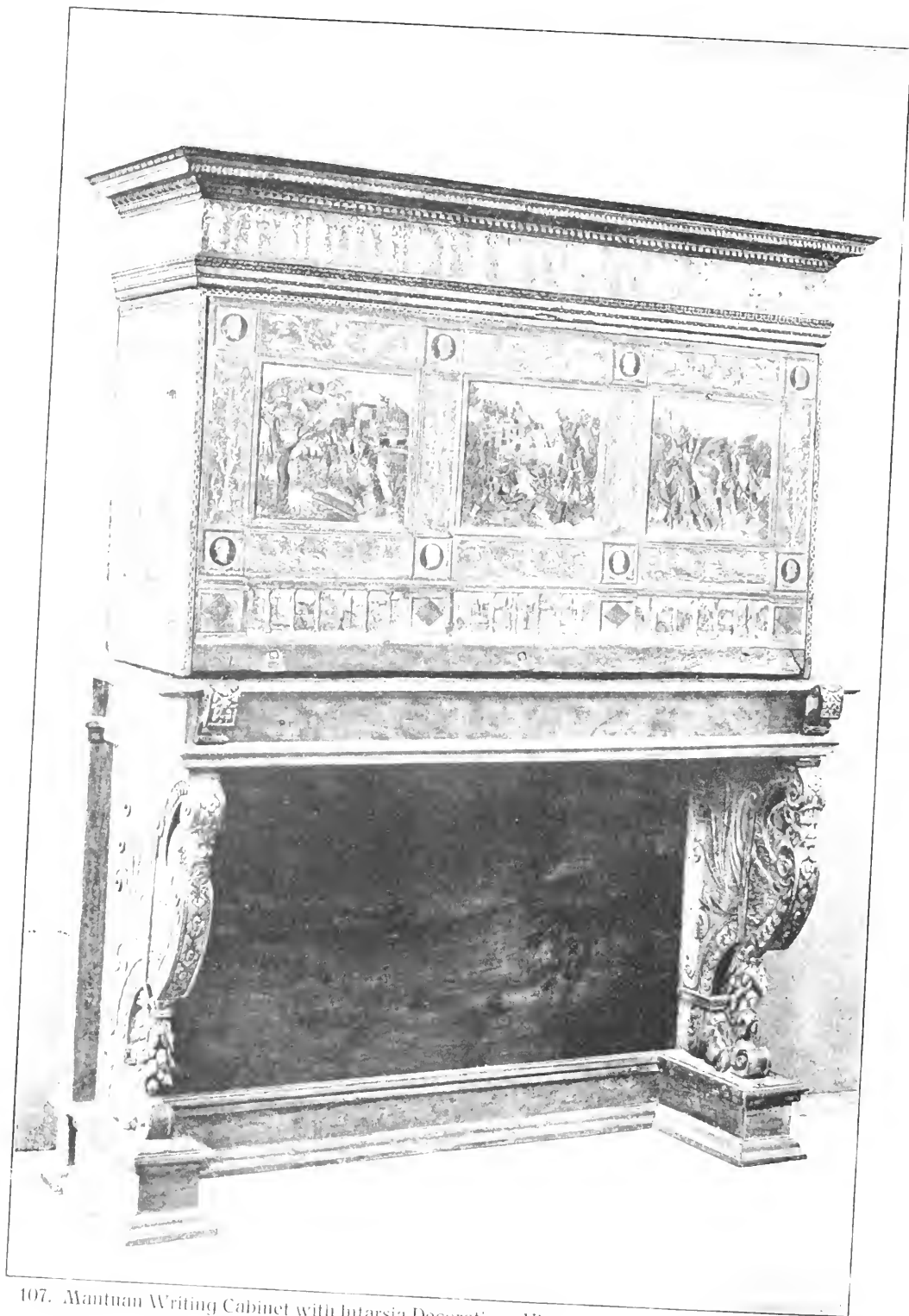
104. Folding-Chair. Dr. A. Figdor Collection, Vienna.



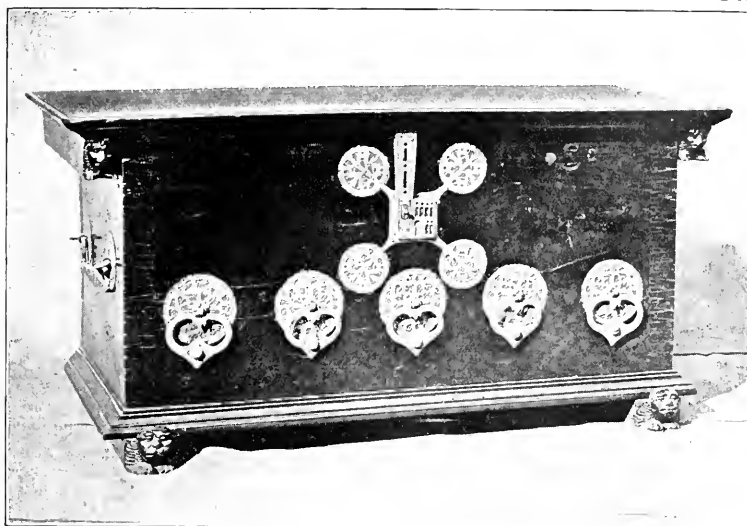
106. Veronese Cassone about 1510. Poldi Museum, Milano.



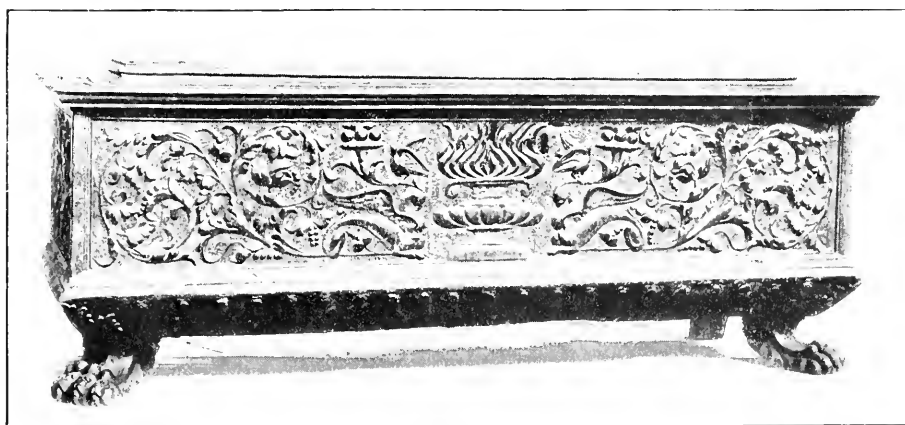
108. Mantuan Writing Cabinet (Opened) with Intarsia Decoration.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



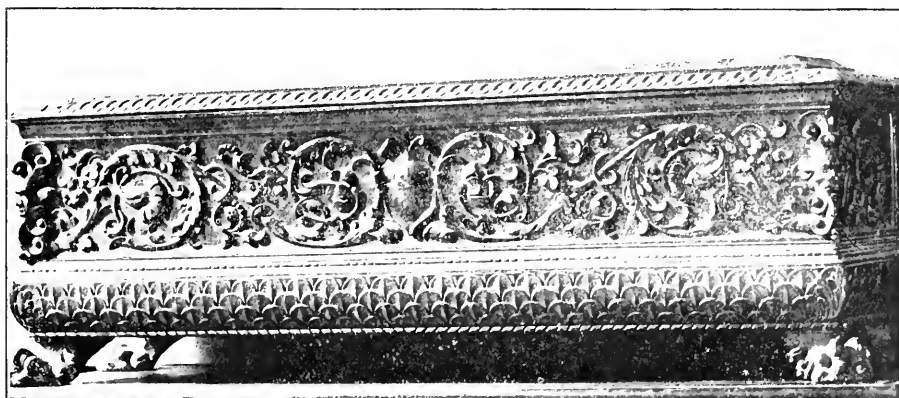
107. Mantuan Writing Cabinet with Intarsia Decoration. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



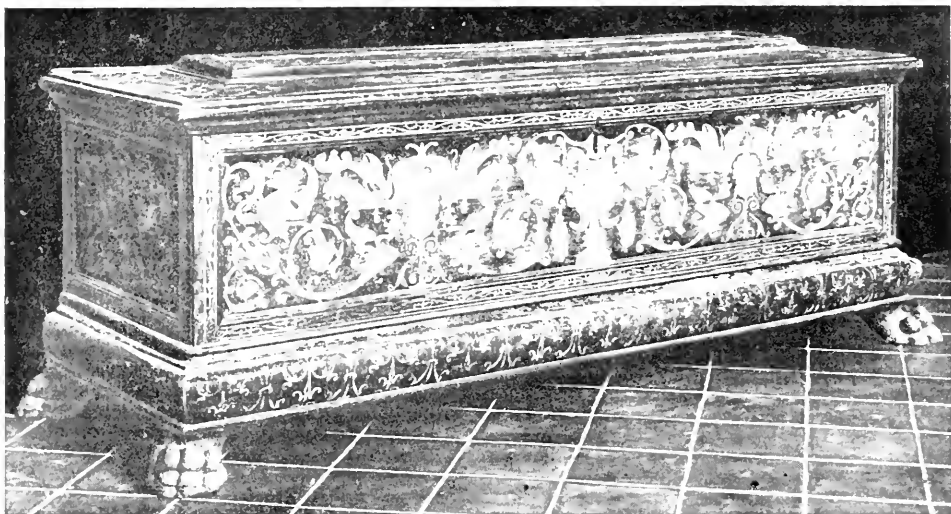
109. Provincial Cassone. Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Berlin.



110. Bolognese Cassone. Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Leipzig.



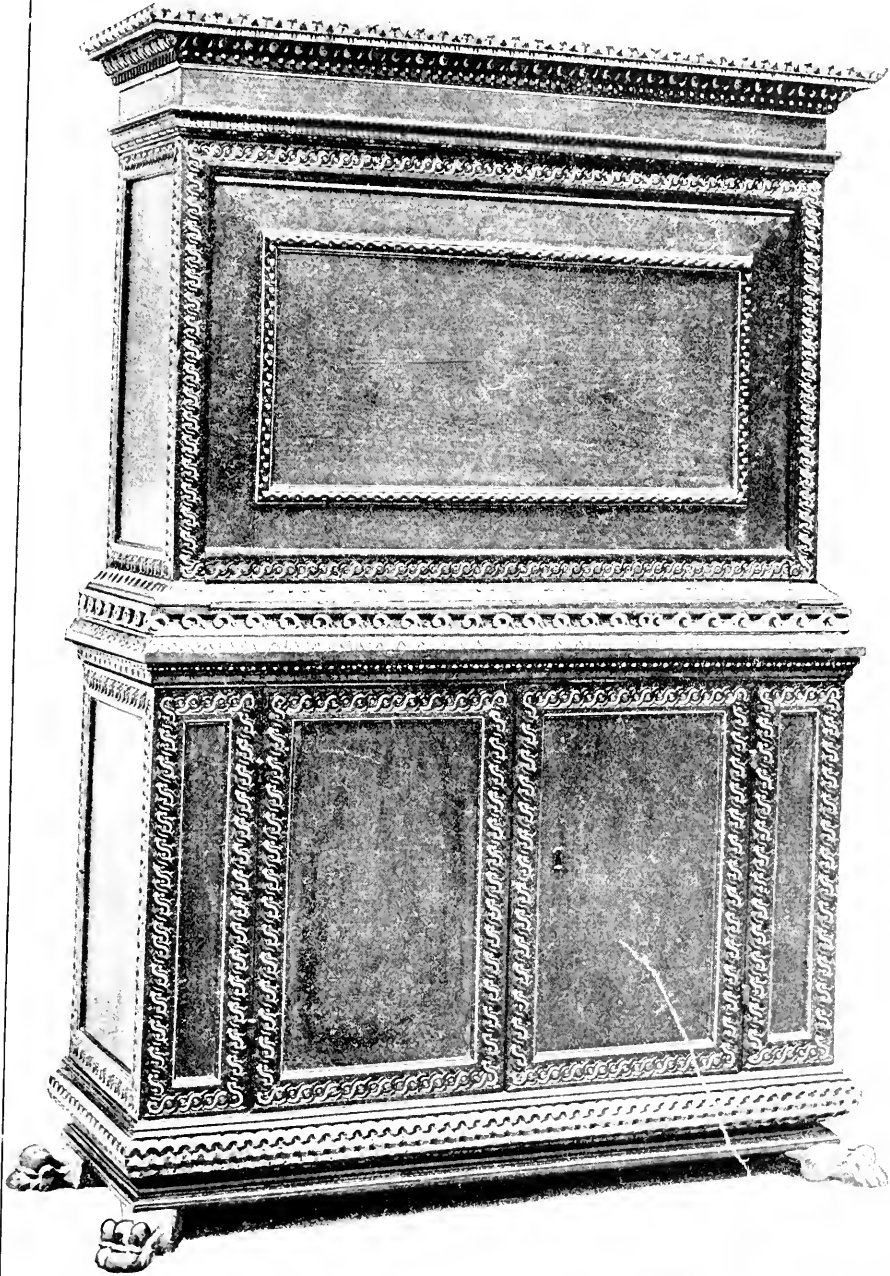
111. Bolognese Cassone. In a Private Collection.



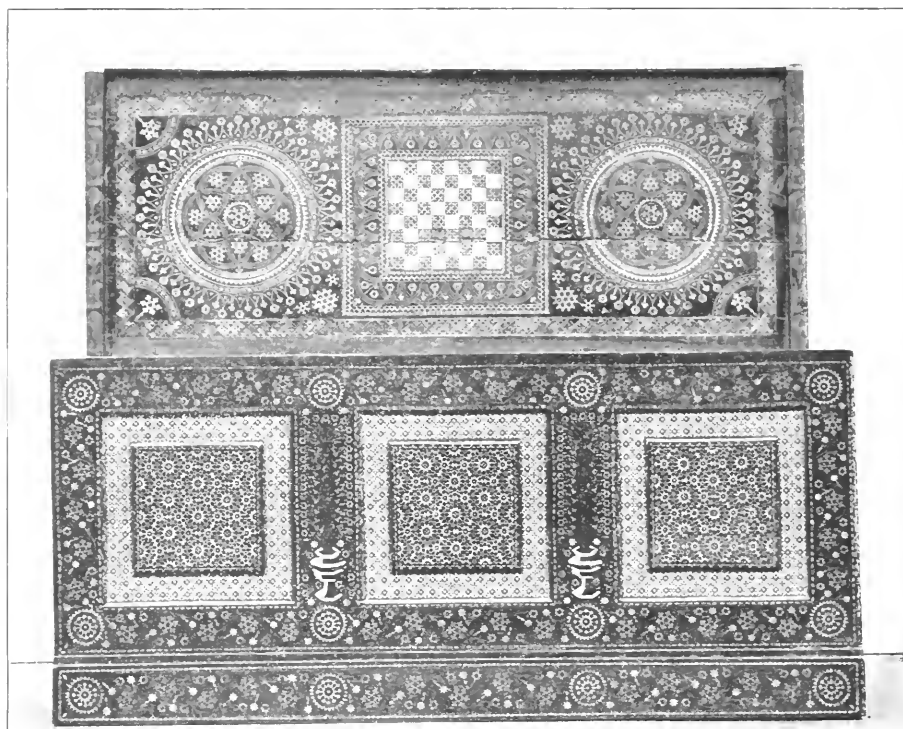
112. Bolognese Cassone about 1560. In a Private Collection.



115. Provincial Table.

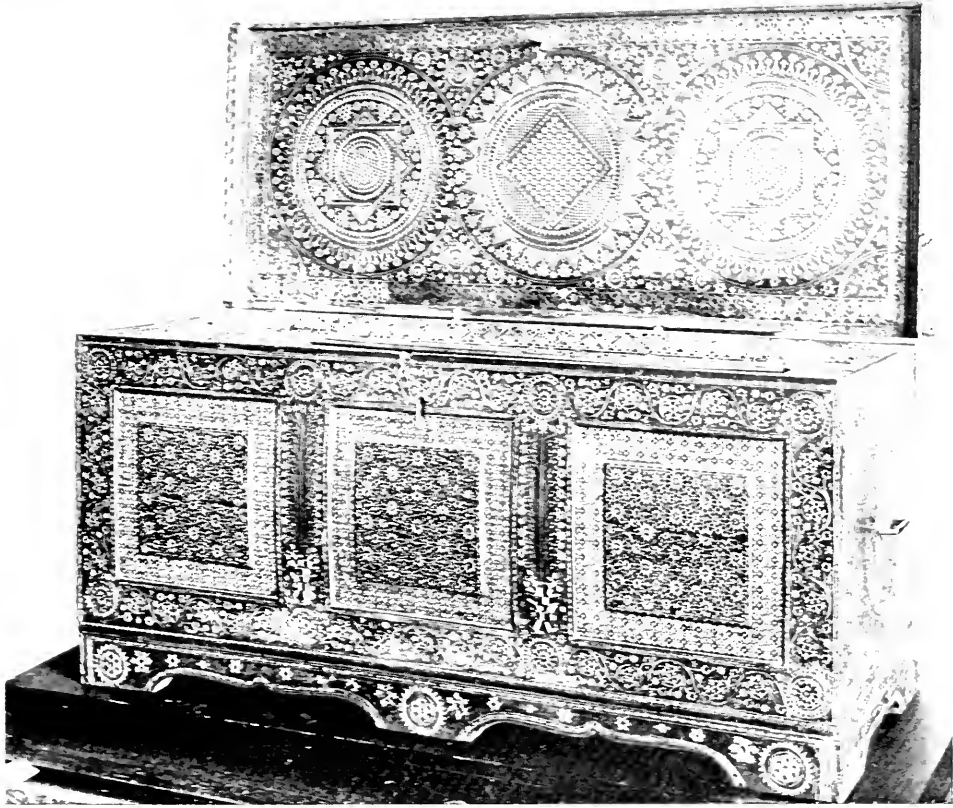


114. Provincial Writing Cabinet. Kunstgewerbe-Museum, Berlin.



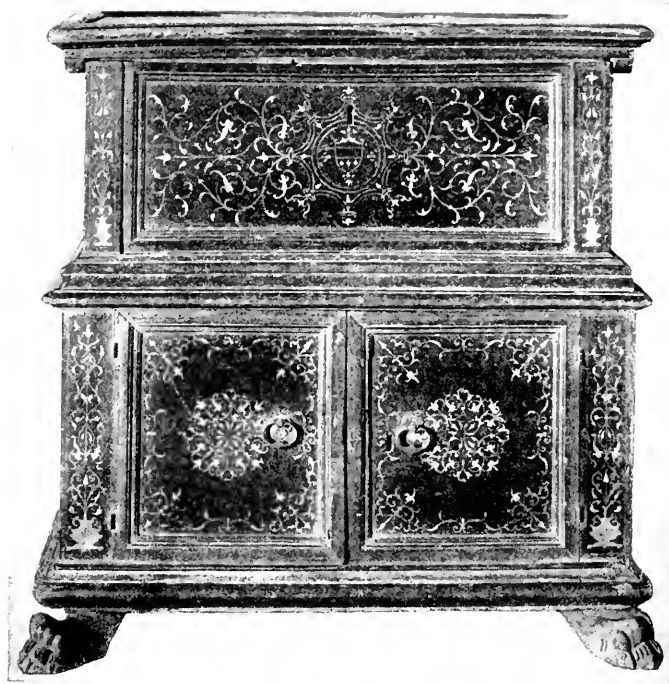
115.

Cassone Inlaid with Certosina. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



116.

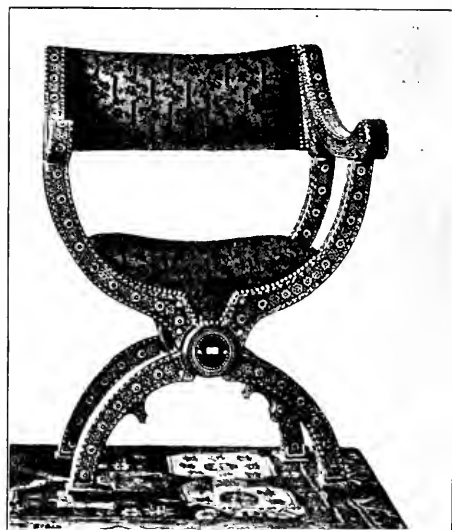
Cassone Inlaid with Certosina about 1500. Otto Lanz Collection, Amsterdam.



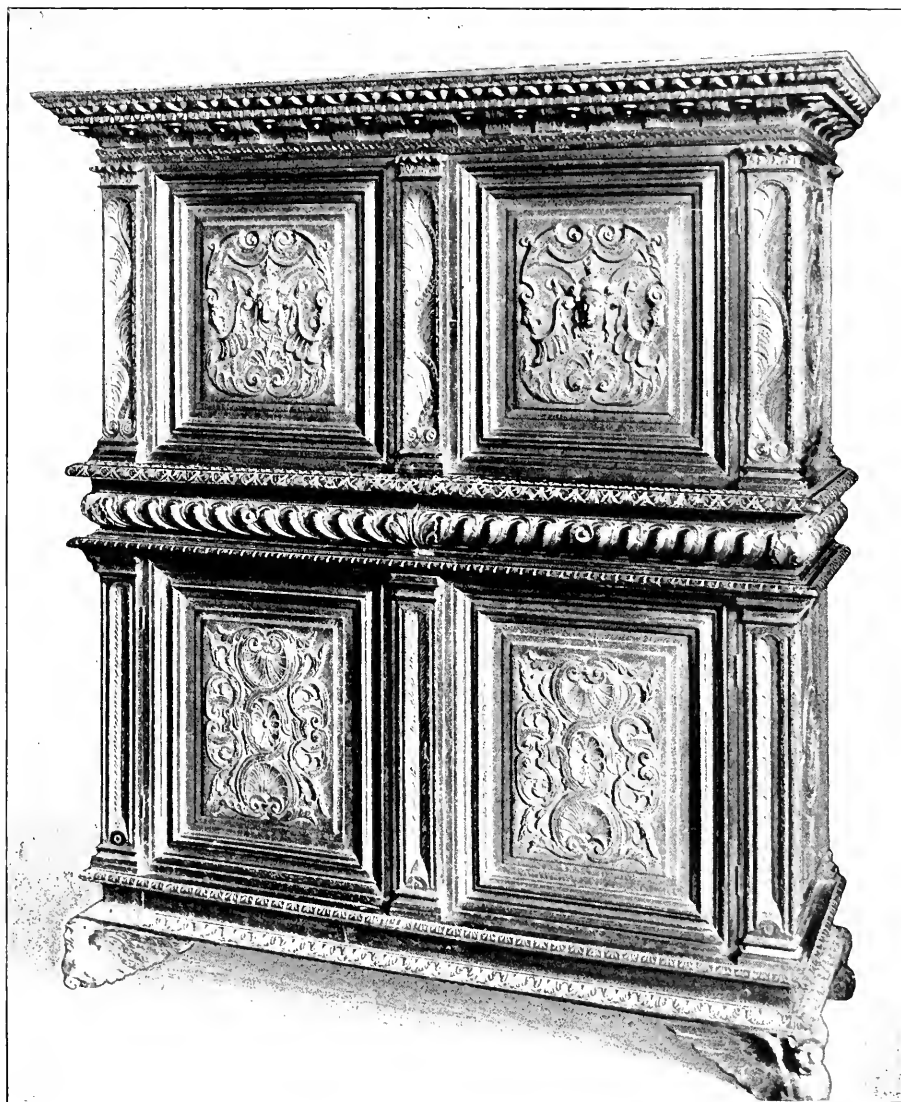
117. Lombardic Cabinet about 1550. O. Lanz Collection, Amsterdam.



118. Lombardic Arm Chair about 1500.
Otto Lanz Collection, Amsterdam.

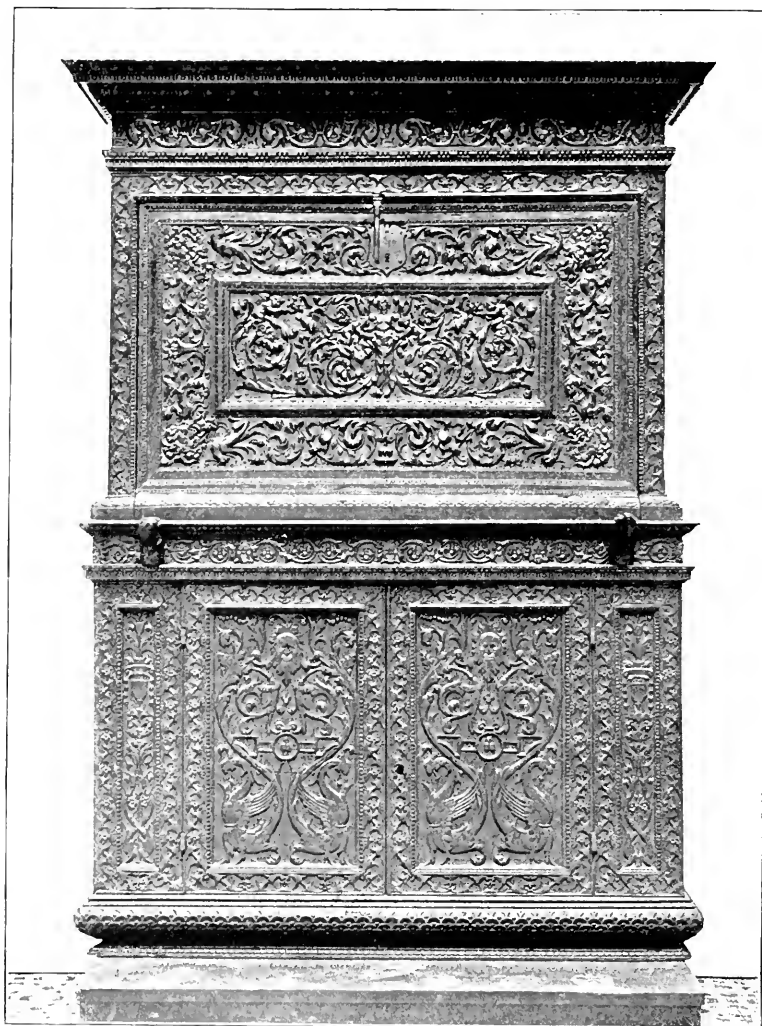


119. Arm Chair Inlaid with Certosina.
Dr. A. Figdor Collection, Vienna.



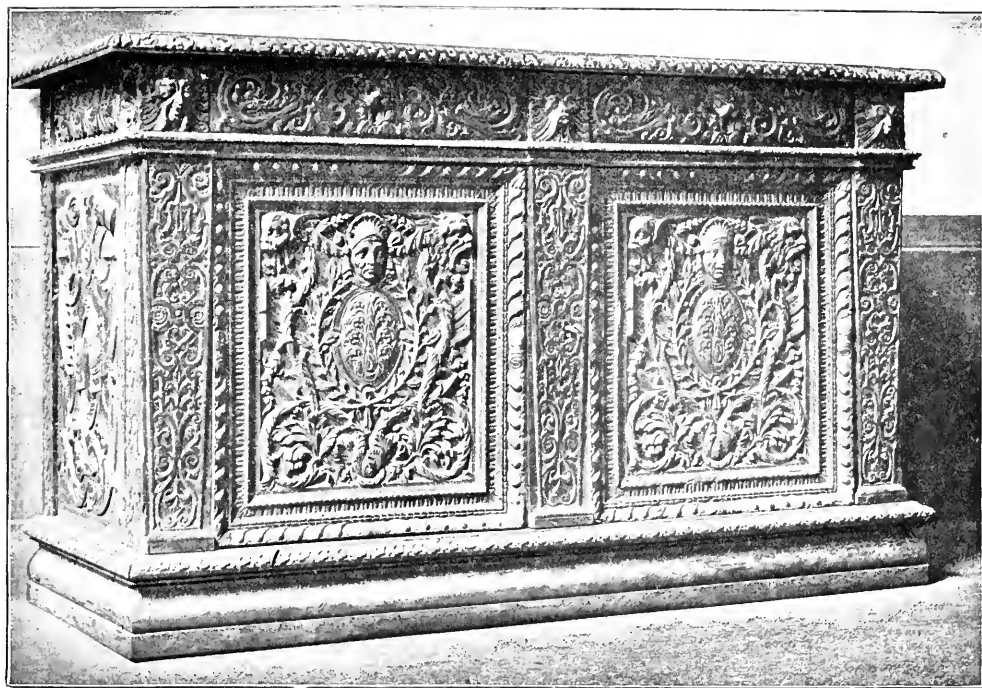
120.

Ligurian Cabinet. Museum at Magdeburg.



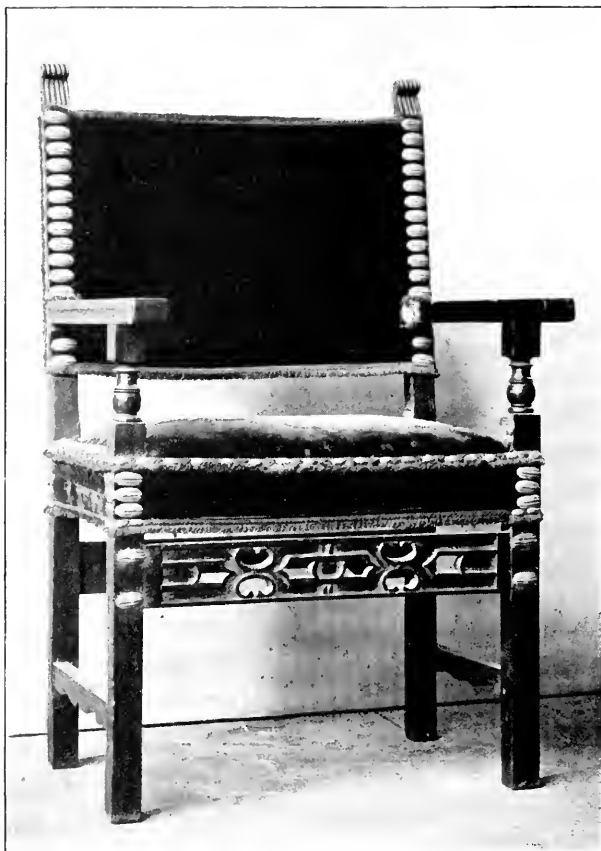
121.

Ligurian Cabinet. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



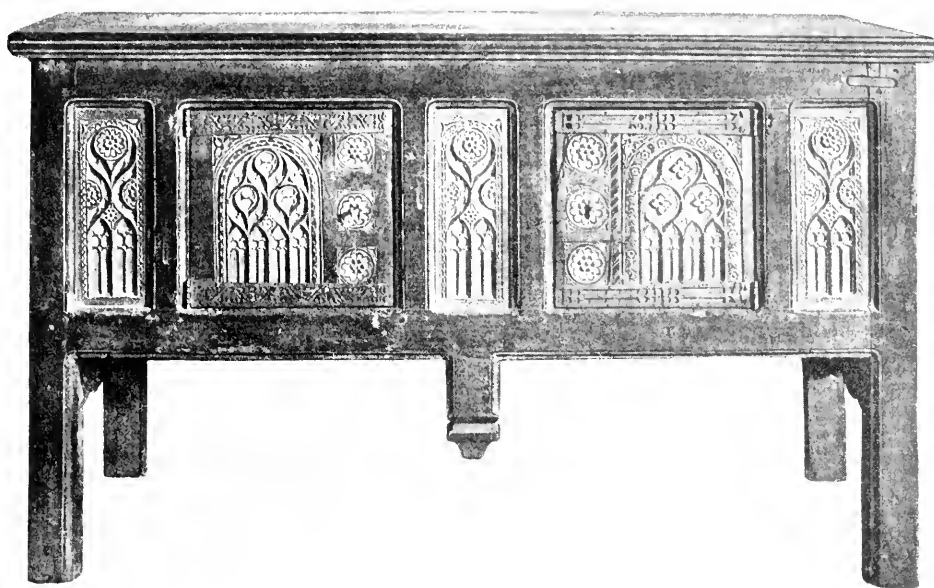
122.

Ligurian Credenza. Formerly in the Bardini Collection, Florence.



123.

Ligurian Arm Chair. In a Private Collection.



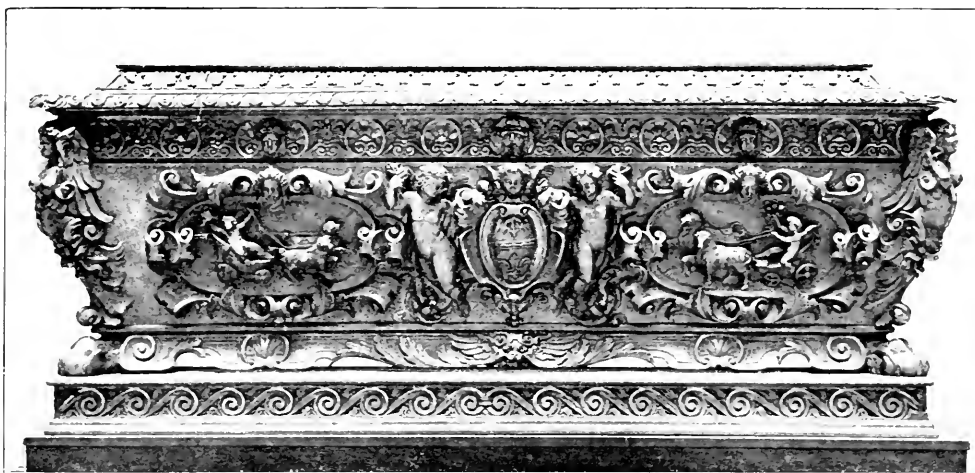
124.

Savoyan Cassone about 1500. In a Private Collection.



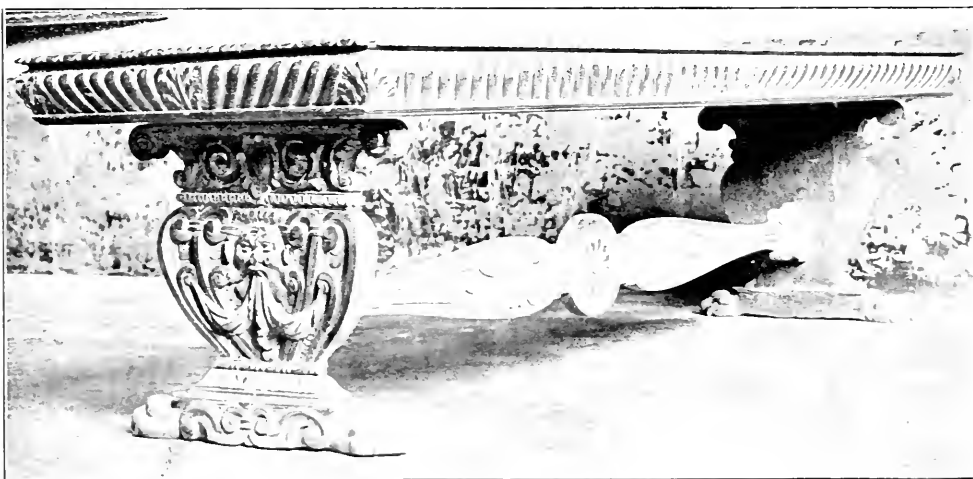
125.

Roman Cassone about 1540. Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin.



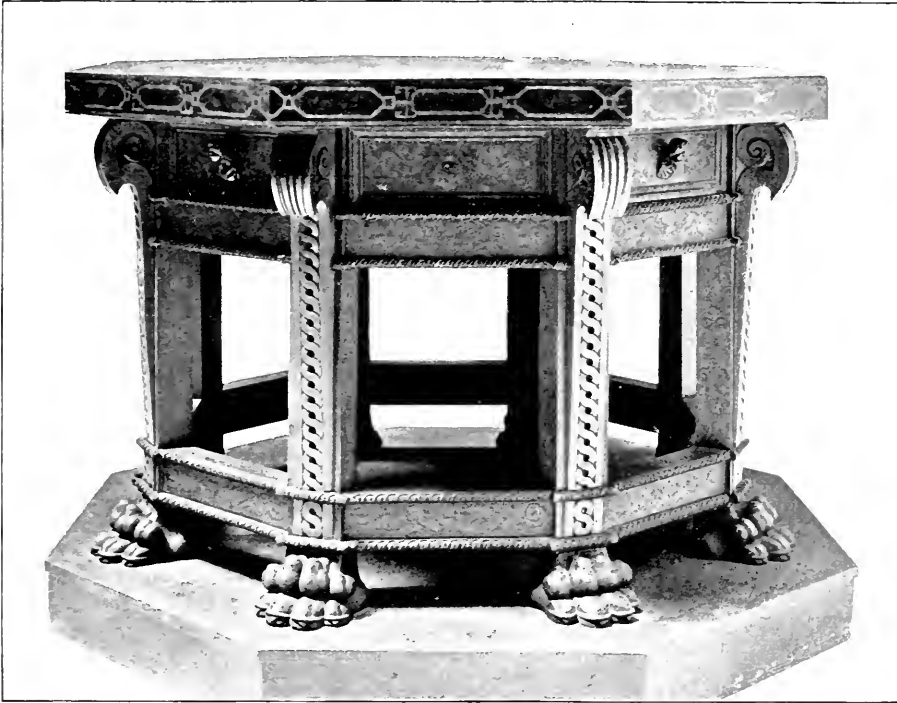
126.

Roman Cassone. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



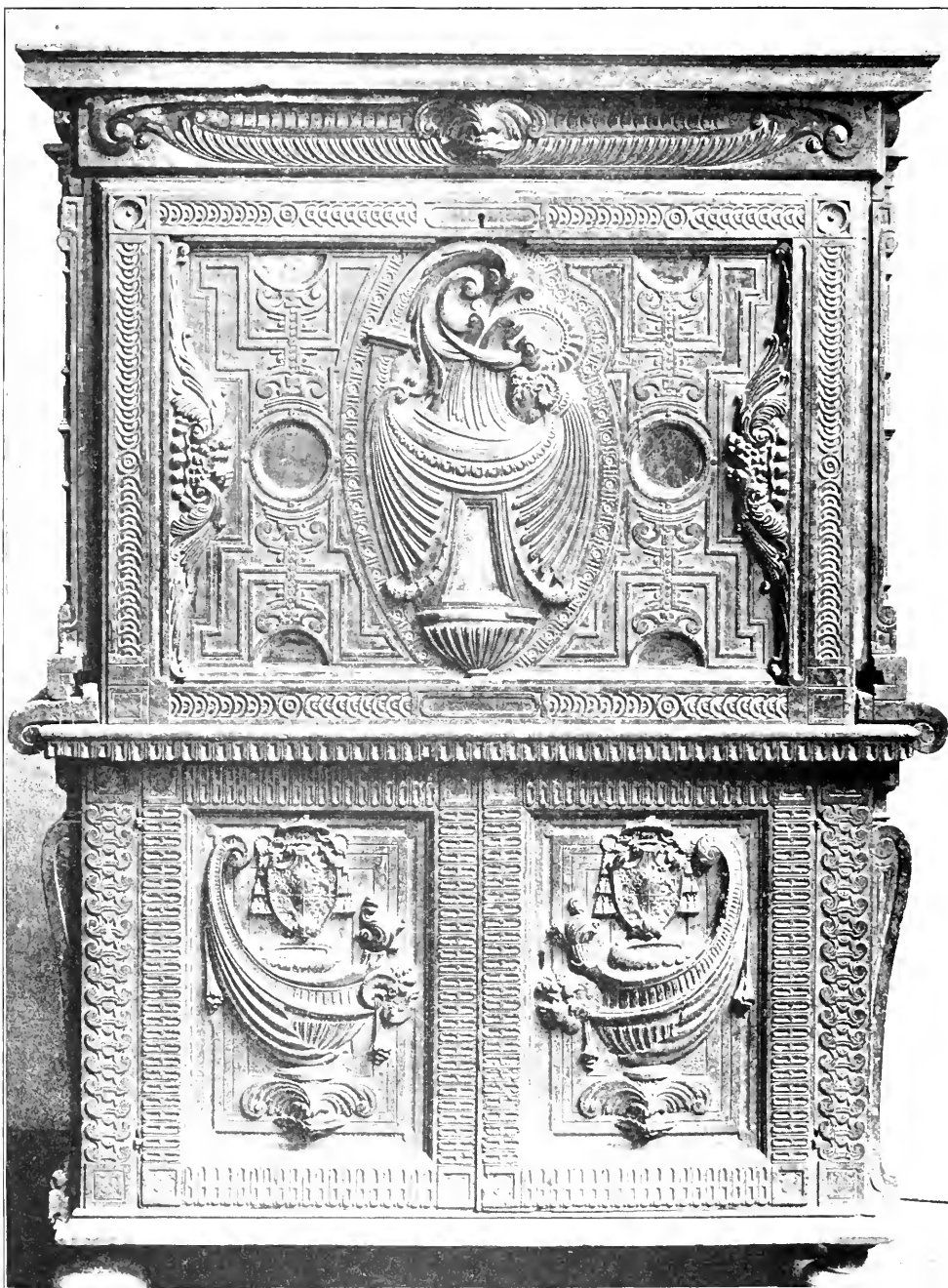
127.

Roman Table. In a Private Collection.



128.

Roman Table. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.





130.

Roman Writing Desk. Otto Beit Collection, London.

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